Encounter

May 1978 80p

Luigi Barzini

Can One Still Believe in European Civilisation?

GEORGE URBAN, continuing his series of long interviews, discusses with the distinguished Italian liberal the theme of Liberty & its Discontents: alienation, materialism, mass-culture, populist disaffection, and the new flight from freedom . . . .

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Film & Theatre

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Old Crimes, New Secrets

R's Column
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Edited by Melvin J. Lasky & Anthony Thwaite

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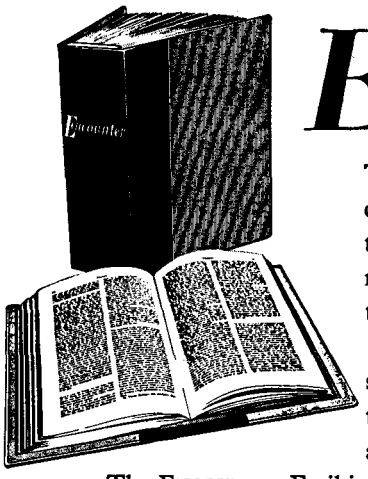

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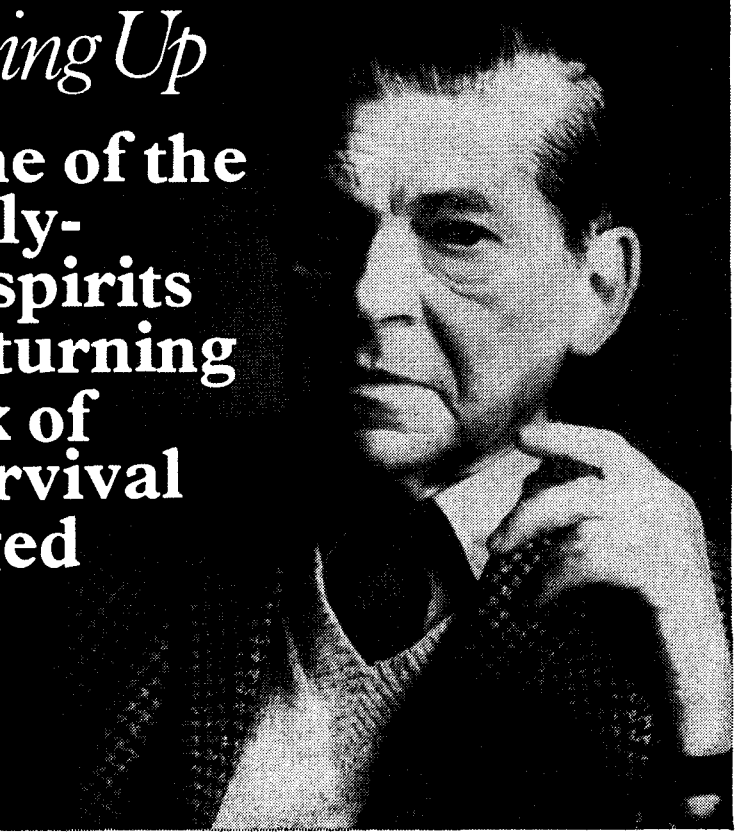
Arthur Koestler

JANUS
A Summing Up

'Here is one of the most widely-informed spirits of the age turning to the crux of human survival on a ravaged planet.'

George Steiner, Sunday Times



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Claire Villiers

Tale of Love

SHE WAS AS BRAVE as Boadicea and she made her own black wadded dressing-gowns. She was a smashing cook. She swore worse than Long John Silver. She was my Gran. A fact that like Time, she said, it was often a damn sight better to ignore.

She cooked On Her Nerves, spoon in hand because A Good Cook Always Has a Dry Throat. She cooked on an open range, which was theatrical (we had Calor Gas as well). Onion stew for firsts and apple stew for afters. Lumps of soot fell in whichever kind of stew it was, and as she stirred them in, she swore. The swears sprang from the soles of her pom-pom slippers, revving-up like the sound of some hard-done-by engine. Strung-together swears like Spanish onions, becoming bloodcurdlingly obscene as the long foodless mornings wore on, the two of us increasingly ravenous because Good Cooks Couldn't Be Tied To Time.

I wanted insanely to swear her swearwords and do my hair like she did in a sumptuously coloured cow-pat, piled high on her head. I wanted the tortoiseshell comb that she wore on her hair and her turquoise earrings, and I wanted illegally to bounce on her bed. Staring at my spotty adolescent face in the ivory-backed mirror, I reckoned if I had all these things I would be rendered Great like Gran, magically able to play piano very fast, kill hens and cook stews. But when I asked outright for the comb or the earrings the answer was always, "The day I die or you get married." I didn't believe either catastrophe could ever happen and neither did she. Nothing changed.

Gran swore nothing bad had gone to her making, proudly rolling up the pink crinkly slip that she wore and telling me that was how a stomach *should* look, with Its Own Girdle Of Muscle, assuring me she had never worn a bra or a belt in her life yet her measurements were the same as the day she got married, her legs better even than Brigitte Bardot's, and that the greatest mistake a young girl could make was to Let Her Stomach Go. And this above all: Never Get A Lazy Body.

Gran would go Missing Believed Bed all afternoon and get up to eat A Light Snack For A Delicate Appetite; then we'd sit by the fire and it would be a web of words and memories till the fire burned out. Tales of her father, six foot when he was eighty—"In those days men were men." And her mother so mouthwateringly beautiful that on market days men followed her for miles to see if she was real. Nothing went on her face but rainwater and oatmeal of the finest quality. Soap of course was ageing. Soap *killed* the skin. It made Gran's heart sink seeing the papers full of strapping great gorillas of girls all living in sin with measling *shrimps*. Gran told me men had *shrunk* since her day and in that time there wasn't so much talk about sex. There was no such thing as a bored wife either. "We were all too busy with our boy friends."

The lamp smoked its funnel brown and her throat got dry retelling her own legends—The Men She'd Buried, The Money She'd Let Slip Through Her Fingers, shootings, fights, killings, ravings, salves for the smallpox and towels wrung out in ice-cold water for firming the bust. A fantasy recipe for tipsy cake which had been handed down to her. Love-ins, and lie-ins, sons and lovers, in-laws and out-laws, limp-eyed children and loyal retainers, folks who'd done the dirty

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on her and come off second-best. She brushed her long hair with a silver-backed brush and banged on about the wickedness of ruining one's crowning glory with dyes, perms and bleaches, but even I knew her hair could hardly be red at her age, and even I knew better than dare say so.

I cut the nails of her right hand, the left she could do herself. Brittle nail-parings shot across the hearth. She told me she never grew hair under her arms, which wasn't true, that she only weighed eight stone in her slip, which wasn't true either, and that she had never thought anything of fair men. "Give me a dark man every time. And see here, dear, when you choose a man for yourself make sure you get one that *is* a man, not one of these measling *shrimps*." She made it sound like choosing from a litter of kittens.

EVERY NIGHT SHE HELD COURT, sitting stately in her black dressing-gown, wearing the tortoiseshell comb and the tiny turquoise earrings, which I hankered after with no success. Only her feet spoiled the picture, purplish in her pom-pom slippers because no power on earth would make her take her purple leg pills. A masochistic moth hurled itself repeatedly against the lamp bowl; we both watched it coming back for more. "It's easily attracted", she said, and she sang the song she said contained Life.

At sixteen she knew no care.
How could she, young and pure as light?
And all around her, everywhere,
Butterflies. All White.

A lover came and she dropped those eyes,
Soft with violets, wet with dew,
And there pursued her everywhere
Butterflies. All Blue.

Before she knew, her heart was gone.
Its tale of love was swiftly told.
And all about her wheeled and shone
Butterflies. All Gold.

Then he forsook her one sad day.
She wept and cried "Oh love, come back".
There only came to her, forlorn,
Butterflies. All Black.

That would be the start of a boatload of stories I knew already, and I would go to sleep pretending to listen till she woke me again and told me it was time to go up. Some nights the clouds gathered the stars into darkness and rain drummed the chipped windowsill. The night was full of fear of burning moths and black butterflies and wanting time to stand still and Gran to live for ever and wanting to talk woman-talk to her because we could only play-act, she being a past-living puppet and me a head-nodding marionette.

There was one night when the kitchen clock struck insultingly and clamorously thirteen o'clock and a bat got into my bedroom if not an actual vampire. I thought of it sucking my blood, getting in my hair so I had to have my head cut off, and I turned Judassy and squealed "Go in Gran's hair, bat. She's got lovely long hair. You'd love it in my Gran's hair, bat!" Gran, hearing her name in the night, sprang out of bed, herself like a bat out of hell, seizing a banister-brush in a grip that was steady as a rock. She beat that bat to death in a business-like way and looking later on its gory bat-bits steaming in a bucket, remarked, "That bat's a bit like you now. In need of a set of brains."

TIME DIDN'T STAND STILL for Gran any more than it does for anyone else, and we had to have Deathshead, who was meant to help her round the house and in and out of the bath, but just stood round with her arms grimly folded, talking of all the old folk she knew who were going senile. "In our family we *never* go senile", my Gran would grandly interject.

Deathshead had a special way of looking dubious. Birth, Copulation and Death were her strong suits. Her huge green overalled bottom blocked the hall from side to side, She lived on her hands and knees and we never knew whether to step right over her, say Excuse me, or kick her right up the arse. At mealtimes she would surprise us by suddenly emerging from under the table like some sixteen-stone green Great Dane. "She imagines she works better in that position", sniffed my Gran.

I did once see Deathshead standing up. She had got into the front room where she wasn't allowed, and was polishing the face of one of Gran's illustrious ancestors with a

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rag caked with green soap. "The missus don't like me doing this", she cackled joyously, "but I give all their faces a good soaping-over now and then." Gran went on grimly about servants who didn't know their place. Deathshead retaliated with all the old people she knew who were senile. "Servants!", she would cackle, looking up from under the table. "Poor old thing really *is* going senile now."

Everywhere Deathshead went she went on all fours, leaving a snail's trail of Boot's green soap. Once she beckoned me again into the forbidden room. "Missus won't half go for me", she chuckled childishly. "I done her ruby vase in. In fact I done the two."

Deathshead's womb had fallen down in the bath through using too much Dettol. She had had thirteen children and never went to bed without a romantic novel. Her husband was a frisky beast who couldn't keep off sex for five minutes. Fourteen stitches she had to have put in her whatnot. (Gran said her mouth should have been stitched up as well.) Thirteen children, all in good positions. The boys were little puddings and the girls were little witches. Birth. Copulation. Death and Monthly Periods. The sausages in the pan became her big chilblained hands. The tap in the kitchen her rheumy eyes. Her great green overalled arse was everywhere.

SOAP KILLED MY GRAN. After that stroke they sent her home from hospital, determined to die in her own bed. "Gangrene", hissed Deathshead almost enthusiastically. "There's a hole in her back you can put your hand in. Those nurses have done that to her. They didn't ought to have used soap on the missus's delicate skin."

The district nurse finally had to lock Deathshead out.

"I have been locked out of bedrooms before", said Deathshead defiantly, "and I know what it means. Anyway, that nurse is only a *green*."

There were days when Gran seemed better and the sun shone and made a pattern on the floor and the canary sang and Gran knew me, and then Deathshead would tap me on the shoulder and say, "Not being rude, dear, but you *do* know you have to straighten their limbs out, and shouldn't we cut her hair off *now*?"

"Not unless you want to kill her." I gasped at the blasphemy.

"She'll get *nits*", Deathshead hissed.

"In our family", said Gran, with a ghostly attempt at authority, "we do *not* get nits."

"Everyone gets' em", continued Deathshead blithely. "I get 'em myself. I get 'em off *Old People*. Here, is your grandmother Jewish, dear? I've nursed a lot of elderly Jewesses and they always go like that round the nose at the end."

"I want to go to sleep", said my grandmother. "For ever, do you understand?" She went to sleep for ever and I cut her nails for the last time.

"Put pennies on her eyes", instructed Deathshead. "And stick her teeth in or she'll set terrible." Deathshead went on making pastry obstinately the day my Gran died. Her eyes were watering and she said "Dunno what it is about me, dear, and the doc dunno either, but I'm a shocking runner."

THE HOUSE WAS QUIET and ghostly. Gran was gone. The Uncles came. Uncle One had cut himself shaving and had the runs. Uncle Two kept counting the ornaments. "She was not a child-loving woman", they said, but little did they know. The funeral car turned in at the grey gates and out of the cemetery shadows emerged a sixteen-stone spectre laughing and crying "Oh my poor missus", and wearing for once not the green nylon overall but a neat navy coat and my Gran's cuban-heeled shoes, holding a bunch of daffs which she thrust forward in her great sausagey hands. It seemed as if she was crying. Green soap tears. I got out of the car and kissed her cold red face and got told off for encouraging her.

"They'll do anything to get in on the tea", the Uncles said, and they told me to send her a card with thank-you for your services but we will not be needing you any more and to stick a fiver in it. I felt Judassy then about poor Old Deathshead who told me how long it took for a body to decompose and tales of a son of hers who worked in a mortuary, but I went home and put on Gran's turquoise earrings and wound my hair up in the tortoiseshell comb and looking at myself in the ivory-backed mirror said "Balls to the

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lot of it. I am the Missus now. I will make up my own mythology." Then I went into her bedroom and bounced on her bed.

I did see Deathshead again, but not by my Gran's grave. It was in the fish shop. She said she was working for a dentist but he wanted more than stair-cleaning. She told me it was really surprising how many sex-mad dentists there were in the world. A moth flew out of what she was wearing, my Gran's so-called Persian Lamb, and Deathshead told me tales of all the bad luck she had had, all through her life, through the wearing of dead people's coats.

Days

Some days promise well. Refracted sun,
Cut by others' glass, enlightens mine;
The curtains warm where, luminous as wine,
Light seeps between the ended and begun;
At last the shapes of midnight disarray
Are redrawn in the brittle lines of day.

Already clouds obstruct the common light:
The gleam has gone—we missed it once again
And now the world seems, as it is, mundane.
Orange juice, toast, coffee, the quick bite
For breakfast and the newspaper's quick read:
Each satisfies a habit, not a need.

And the edenic dawn? No more than rest
Doing its job, easing us through its phase
Of waking optimism. What are days
But different ways of failing or at best
Of seeming to succeed? How well we seem,
Depending on the state of mind or dream,

Will not in fact reveal how well we are.
The morning folds; the afternoon spreads out
Its greying manifesto; care and doubt
Thicken in the unconditioned air.
Slowed and dyspeptic after lunch, we find
Surrounding us the dull lethargic grind

Which trades as working, earning, getting on.
Words fall like slabs to pave our arguments
While elsewhere, naggingly, the mind presents
An image of . . . it could be anyone,
Through all the sad delusions, all the pain,
Going downhill, alone, into the rain.

Neil Powell

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GEORGE URBAN

Liberty & Its Discontents

A Conversation with Luigi Barzini

1. Of Freedom and Alienation

GEORGE URBAN: "THE LIBERTY OF THE SUBJECT *depends on the silence of the law", Hobbes wrote in* Leviathan *in 1650. In the late 1970s, the law in the Western world, though incomparably less silent than it was in Hobbes's time, is nevertheless silent enough on the majority of those issues that affect the private life of the individual. Despite our protestations to the contrary, we still enjoy—certainly in comparison with the Soviet Union, China, Czechoslovakia or Cambodia—a good deal of freedom from the interference of the state and its agents. The question is: what are we free to do with our freedom? Does the absence of a tyrannical monarch, a power-hungry church, or a totalitarian ideology both make us free to choose to do certain things and equip us with the ability to do them? In other words, is "liberty", as the word is used in common parlance, enough?*

Let me quote you, by way of a trivial but typical example, one day in the life of an acquaintance of mine —a BBC studio attendant, now in her early forties. She and her husband live in a basement apartment some seven miles from the centre of London. She starts her day by moving from the darkness of the basement of her home to the darkness of the London Underground, where she spends forty-five minutes or more waiting for a train and being transported in a jam-packed coach to Kingsway station. Her work in the BBC takes her underground once again, this time for the rest of the day, because the BBC's studios are catacomb-like structures, most of them built during the War, one or two floors under street level as a precaution against air raids. There she sits for forty hours each week, neither seeing the light of day nor being able to catch a breath of fresh air. Her sole job, for which a university degree is normally required, is to switch on or off one of two or three microphones and tape machines as directed by the producer. At the end of each programme, she makes a ten-second announcement in English: "This is the BBC World Service [or European Service, as the case may be]; our next transmission is in the Finnish [or whatever] language." For the programmes she assists in putting on the air are in Chinese, Urdu, Arabic, Swahili, Russian or any of the thirty-eight languages in which the BBC's External Services broadcast. She understands none of them, but spends her entire day working with them. So much for the use of her intelligence.

When she has a break, she can repair to another underground establishment, the BBC canteen. I will not describe its amenities, because the prototype of BBC canteens has been classically depicted by George Orwell (himself a BBC employee at the time), in 1984. *He modelled, as he tells us, his canteen of the "Ministry of Truth" on what he saw at 100 Oxford Street—the former home of the BBC Overseas Service—where he worked as a producer.*

> **A low-ceilinged, crowded room, its walls grimy from the contact of innumerable bodies; battered metal tables and chairs, placed so close together that you sat with elbows touching; bent spoons, dented trays, coarse mugs; all surfaces greasy, grime in every crack. . . .** [1]

This, then, is the environment in which my friend spends most of her waking hours. At the end of her day, if she is lucky enough not to be on night shift or dawn duty, she tries to squeeze in some hasty shopping—then, back to the rush-hour tube train, and from there to the kitchen of the basement apartment to turn frozen food into dinner and provide her husband with as good company as her remaining energy will allow. In fact, most of her evening is spent watching some undemanding, homogenised entertainment on television.

Now, this job—"studio managing" as it is euphemistically called in BBC jargon—is in great demand. Most of the people I have known holding it (and my friend is one of them) come from very good schools and universities. It is thought to be a stepping-stone to better things, but only very few make the step—the rest remain penned in their caves for 10 or 20 years, or indeed for the duration of their working lives.

I FIND ALL THIS *a frightening indictment of our civilisation. We can, I think, claim with reasonable justification that in the liberal-democratic societies of the West European type most of the traditional criteria of what constitutes "freedom" have been tolerably met. Yet our sense of being unfree in ways which our forefathers could not foresee is daily increasing. With the promises of liberty fulfilled and institutionalised,*

[1] One should say in fairness to the BBC that most BBC canteens have, since Orwell's time as an employee, taken on a considerably less unappetising appearance.

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the promised land of liberty recedes ever further into the distance.

"Liberty. . . [to quote Hobbes again] signifieth, properly, the absence of opposition. . . ."

"Freedom [says Kant] is the autonomy of self-determination of rational beings."

"By liberty [says Lord Acton] I mean the assurance that every man shall be protected in doing what he believes to be his duty against the influences of authority and majorities, custom and opinion."

No reason to quarrel with any of these statements. Now take a look at the life of my friend at the BBC. She is *a rational autonomous being; she is* not *being prevented from doing what she believes to be her duty either by a government, a party or any other authority; she need* not *fear the KGB's knock on the door at dawn; she can read a free press; she has financial security—but can we say without making a mockery of the word that she is "free", rather than enslaved and alienated? Can we say that the marvels of technology, the shorter working week, universal health insurance, security in old age, women's emancipation have set her "free"? Is she better off or more useful to society than she would be if she were minding children and looking after the house? "Freedom is Slavery" is Orwell's slogan in the Communist utopia of* 1984. *Haven't we, as members of urbanised mass societies, already reached a state where "Freedom is Slavery" aptly describes our* own *lives in 1978?*

BARZINI: If our comparison is with the agricultural world of yesterday—and that is the point of reference of most criticisms of alienation in industrial society—then I would say that the tillers of the soil and the minders of cattle had duller and more onerous jobs to do than your lady in her studio cubicle.

There are people in Southern Italy or even in the valleys of the Alps who still spend their lives doing the same jobs over and over again. Perhaps the landscape is more attractive; perhaps the taste of the food is better than it is in the BBC; perhaps there is some satisfaction in seeing the pigs grow fat that your lady in London does not experience—but there are worse jobs in the world than being a studio attendant. One of the worst jobs is having no job at all. Why does your lady friend, who is after all free to take on something else, not resign if she finds the dehumanisation unbearable? She could teach English to foreigners—she could, if she were unmarried, go to the South Sea islands and become secretary to some professor of anthropology—she could do any number of things. If she has not done so it is obviously her choice to stay where she is—there must be advantages in what she is doing. Now, what would these be? A highly organised routine which allows her to spend her mental time on whatever she likes; the lack of any real responsibility; the certainty of an annual step-increase in her salary; and a fair pension at the end of it all. She is selling her freedom to obtain security; she prefers dullness and security to a more adventurous and risky life. She has no great claim on my pity—she is not *condemned* to the life she has chosen to live. There are people who would envy her. She has a certain status, and my guess would be that she is not desperately unhappy—not on account of her work, anyhow.

Many years ago I was writing articles from America for the *Corriere della Sera*, and one day Henry Ford invited me to lunch in Detroit. I was a very young man, and I told him with the frankness of youth that it was below the dignity of man to work on the assembly line, that man was created for nobler things, and so forth. I could say all this with complete conviction because I knew that I would myself make an abominable worker on the conveyor belt—that I would be absent-minded, forget to put the right screw in the right hole, and wreck Mr Ford's product.

Well, Henry Ford said—and I remember his words very clearly—that he was not employing on the assembly line the kind of creative minds who could write symphonies; the workers he employed were men whose gifts and intelligence were adequate for the work they were doing—neither more nor less. But think, he went on, what these men would have been doing in European villages at the end of the last century—poorly-paid miserable jobs, seasonal work with long stretches of unemployment, and suchlike. Now, he said, my men have a decent house to go home to; they have a garden, an automobile, paid annual holidays, children whom they can properly feed and clothe and educate. They are incomparably better off than were their ancestors in Italy, or Austria-Hungary.

Modern organisations choose their employees very artfully. Many years ago I was told that the American Telephone Company selected their men and women operators according to a strict rule: they had to be sufficiently intelligent to understand numbers and make the right connections, but not intelligent enough to get bored and alienated by the job. The task of the employment office was to identify people within these two limits—like some types of fish that can live neither above nor below a certain depth of water. So, while I agree with you that repetitive and mindless work is insufferable for an intelligent person, my suspicion is that your lady in the BBC has willingly exchanged challenge for security and is therefore absolutely made for the job.

—How would Henry Ford's comment "dull jobs for dull dogs" go down in Italy?

BARZINI: It wouldn't go down at all well. The

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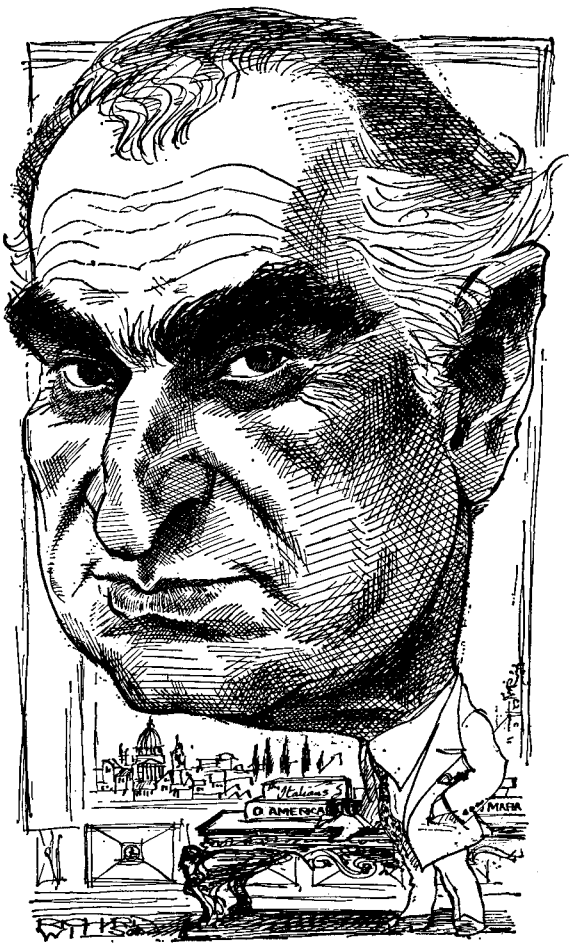
USA is, in my experience, the only country in the world (England may be another) where people will talk about themselves as "average" Americans. In Italy everybody considers himself a unique person bordering on genius—it is a little difficult to man a sausage-packing plant with people who think that their rightful place is in the Academy. The world's work is done by average people—not very gifted, not very brilliant, not even very bright people; but the world would stop functioning if everybody was or believed himself to be a genius. That is why Italy does not function.

—That apparently is also the reason why the USA, with its vast and heterogeneous population, is so much easier to govern than Israel. The American President is only President of 200 million Americans, but the President of Israel is President of two million Presidents.



BARZINI: That is what I'm trying to say. In 1969 we had a wave of very damaging strikes, and when you analyse the reasons that made these Italian workers strike you find that they did not want more money. They wanted something else: more satisfaction in their jobs, greater responsibility, and a certain pleasure in creating things. In other words, they struck against industrial civilisation itself; they rebelled against the tedium and depersonalisation of the assembly line. This is fine as far as it goes, but the same men who hate the assembly line want to have a car, want to be able to go to the supermarket and come away with a loaded trolley, and expect to have a home equipped with all the latest gadgets. Like some savages in the Solomon Islands who do not connect the act of love with childbirth nine months later, the Italian industrial workers do not connect the dull discipline of factory work with their cars, their holidays, and their homes.

—In the Anglo-Saxon world self-fulfilment (for that is what we are talking about) is way down the list of social preferences. Food, housing, holidays, entertainment, cars—yes, but self-fulfilment occurs only at a stage where these other requirements have been well and consistently taken care of. I would have thought in Italy the self-fulfilment threshold is a great deal lower.

BARZINI: I think it is, or used to be. In pre-industrial Italy—which was, shall we say, only ten years ago—everybody's ambition was to be his own master. Italians loved to be stonemasons, bookbinders, shoemakers; and they put a great deal of pride and artistry into what they were doing. If you go to Venice to watch gondolas being built, you see an ancient art which is passed on from father to son. Italian cooks are excellent, Italian cabinet-makers are superb craftsmen, and so on. But all this is now waning. If you have a book bound or a piece of furniture made, you will find it is a man in his sixties doing it. When he is dead, these satisfying jobs will be done no longer. Why? you may well ask.

First, fewer and fewer people can afford to have suits or shoes made to measure or shelves built to fit a particular room. Then, young people believe in satisfaction on demand; they are too impatient to go through a long and difficult apprenticeship in order to attain creative satisfaction. The older men made sacrifices to attain a certain aesthetic pleasure at the bench—the young will not make them.

Take a shepherd watching his flock. He will look after his sheep come sunshine, come rain. He will sleep with them in the open, the hours go by without his knowing it because—it is *his* flock. With every day and every week the sheep get fatter, the wool grows longer and his personal wealth and standing in the world increase with them. Now look at the wage-earner employed to

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watch another man's flock: he will consider the hours too long, the weather inclement, the boredom insufferable.

The difference is that in the first case there is a bond between the man and his sheep: the bond of property, the bond of love, the bond of tradition —while in the second, the shepherd is a hired man who has no incentive. Part of the trouble in the world today is lack of bond between what a man is and what he produces, and this loosening of bonds is on the increase. Mr Pirelli does not own the Pirelli tyre factory; he is probably one of the small shareholders who occupies a senior position in the managerial hierarchy. Mr Agnelli owns less than 2% of the shares of Fiat, so that even people whose forefathers gave their names to industrial empires are no longer directly involved in the product. Imagine the personal involvement of the workers, whose only connection with work is their pay packet at the end of the week.

—Your description of "alienation" is not unlike Marx's, but whereas Marx thought alienation is something peculiar to capitalist society, I suppose you would agree that in a Communist society, where state ownership of the means of production has further increased the distance between the worker and his product, alienation is as serious as it is in the Western world and by most accounts a great deal worse.

BARZINI: This is certainly so.

—Whatever the context in which alienation occurs, it represents a loss of freedom. Those millions of men and women who storm the factory gates come 5 p.m. to escape from the scene of their daily torment—and this is what we see in every industrial city in the world—are prisoners. The question is: how will they, in the long run, react to their imprisonment? Through violence in the football stadium? Vandalism in public places? Extremism in politics? Crime as a form of social protest? Chronic rebellion, if not permanent revolution? A man who has been doing the same 90-degree turn with a spanner eight hours a day will go home needing an outlet—and I don't think he will be painting landscapes.

BARZINI: The loss of freedom is the compulsion to go to the supermarket every day. If man's needs were not inflated, he would be freer. Since he has come to need so many things his father did not need, he is obliged to look for a steady job, security in his old age, health insurance, and all the other services and amenities of the modern welfare state. These are chains that bind him to his job—to the underground cubicle of your BBC studio attendant, to the assembly line, to dull jobs in the government bureaucracy, to handing out stamps all day in the Post Office.

In the last 50 years human beings of all classes have immeasurably increased their expectations. In order to satisfy them they must accept mass society's dull, demeaning and slightly disgusting discipline as a way of life.

Well, what are the penalties likely to be? Youth reacted forcefully in 1968—and I was at the receiving end of their reactions through my own sons. In many ways their rebellion was admirable: they recognised that the only way to be free from compulsive consumerism was to reduce their needs by living as simply and humbly as possible. Their very clothes were a symbol of the simplification of their needs. Their refusal to participate in the rat-race with other human beings for more money, better shoes, a more lavishly equipped house was a blow for freedom—and it failed. It failed because, rightly or wrongly, ordinary human beings above the age of 22 or 24 do not follow the young. It failed because car workers will not sleep rough and walk about in cassocks to demonstrate their support of the protection of the environment. It failed, more particularly, because the overriding ambition of the proletariat, in whom the young put so much hope, is to become indistinguishable from the middle class, and there is no way of becoming *petit bourgeois* outside industrial civilisation.

2. *Serfdom, Old & New*

I AM STILL *stuck with our particular state of unfreedom. The great hurrah-word of our civilisation, at least since the French Revolution, has been liberty—and here we are, accepting the fact of our new enslavement with a sense of helplessness: the young have protested, their protest has gone awry, the old will not learn.*

There are two points here. First, one has, of course, to recognise that economic freedom—the freedom, for example, from the ruinous expenses of serious illness—is a human freedom too. Second, the personal freedom we are in the process of losing is poorly served if we do not call the loss of it by its proper name. If we think that a new type of slavery is spreading over us, why not call it exactly that—rather than pull the wool over our eyes by talking about a growing GNP and higher per capita incomes?

Somewhere in Tolstoy there is a magnificently straightforward warning about how to stop an alcoholic from drinking. If I tell him, says Tolstoy, that only he himself can leave off drinking and that he must do so, there is at least some hope that he will listen to me. But if I tell him that drunkenness is a tremendously complicated problem which doctors and psychiatrists are trying to solve at international conferences, then in all probability he will go on drinking.

Now the Italians, as I have learned from your memorable book of the same title, are fatalists. They believe (as you say) that "man must pay for whatever relief he may gain with other and worse trouble." This is, to my mind, the Luigi Barzini variant of the zero-sum

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game. You gain a bit of economic freedom on the swings only to lose personal freedom on the roundabouts. But I have also learned from your book that the Italians have a special talent for squaring the circle—for talking problems to their solution or dissolution. Is there a specifically Italian answer to the loss of personal freedom and alienation?

BARZINI: There is an Italian *rebelliousness*, an Italian attempt to break through the walls of any rabbit warren—but there is no real answer to this problem. If the Italian people want to have two meals a day—and for most of them it is the first time in history that they *can* have two meals a day —and if they want to wear warm clothes in the winter and have proper medical care when they are ill, then they must accept the loss of a great deal of liberty and pleasure. No one can quite square this circle.

I do not think, however, that liberty in our sense of the word has much bearing on the problem. What the Italian workers wanted was (as I have already said) a sense of satisfaction—the satisfaction of making a splendid violin as they used to in Cremona, or the satisfaction of running a small farm where man is master of his own soul and can plan and enjoy the pleasure of growing things for himself and others—the Jeffersonian virtues. But the small farm is on its way out because it is economically not viable. People used to run it as a way of life—and indeed it was a symbol of a self-contained man's and a tough family's ability to weather adversity. But the old Italian farm, which pleased our ancestors, does not please the young. They are abandoning it, and with it they are turning their backs on that very way of life which they say in their protests they are trying to recapture! They are exchanging the freedoms and satisfactions of farming for the security of industrial and service jobs, no matter how soul-destroying these may be.

Liberty in the sense in which you and I are using the word—Croce's liberty—is an aristocratic notion which does not have a great deal of appeal to the ordinary man and woman. Crocean liberty is the freedom of the best man to emerge, but it is in competition with another and much more popular demand of our time—the demand for equality. The two do not go well together. If the first puts a premium on talent and application, equality means "let everybody rise, or sink, to about the same level."

—A fully stretched, satisfying life is, of course, a freedom, too, and some would say it is the ultimate freedom. But why is it that the Crocean idea of freedom —the liberty of the individual to follow wherever his conscience and the disinterested quest of truth may lead him—has not acquired a larger constituency? I would have thought mass education, television and the wireless would have given our intelligentsia the best means for making people conscious of the need of liberty in this wider sense of the word—and of the dangers of losing it. If intellectuals are the creators and conservators of the freedom of culture (and this is, admittedly, rather begging the question), surely they stand accused of having betrayed their trust.

BARZINI: We live in a world of egalitarian levelling. The taste of the multitude is for equality, not liberty—it goes with universal suffrage, mass production, and the consumer society. The intellectual class, too, is part and parcel of this moral climate—it, too, de-emphasises liberty and stresses equality. As to the duty of intellectuals to bear witness to our culture: there are Marxist teachers and intellectuals in Italy who believe that cultural freedom demands egalitarianism much more than "bourgeois" liberty; and they teach Marxist egalitarianism with the same dedication as others, coming from the opposite end of the ideological spectrum, teach illiberal creeds of another kind, also in the name of cultural freedom. Then, there are a *few* left who talk about freedom—just that. But it is a fast shrinking minority.

Television in Italy is not a medium for the dissemination of Crocean ideas (is it anywhere?). Much rather is it a surrogate for the circus in the *panem et circenses* sense of the word—be it football, bicycle-racing, or a song-festival. It satisfies a deep craving in human nature to supplement with fantasy the mundane activities of the bread-winner. But whereas not so many years ago fantasy used to be satisfied by popular opera, Church music and the Sunday afternoon military band in the rose-garden, television has now replaced interest in all three. The Italian opera is disappearing. So are Italian opera-audiences in which aristocrats, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat used to meet and mingle in that great, classless, Italian social enterprise: applauding some favourite tenor or booing a soprano if she struck the wrong note. In Venice, Rome, Parma and even Milan, some of the world's most famous opera houses are on the verge of financial collapse and function only intermittently and badly. The world is saturated with a bastardised form of music—you have it in aircraft, in the dentist's chair, even in lavatories—and grand opera, like the grand idea of liberty, is at a discount.

—You have said the Italian workers expect job-satisfaction—yet they are doing two things to frustrate it: abandoning the satisfying occupations for dehumanising but secure employment; and, *in their majority, voting Communist. There is a double paradox here. The first you have already explained—what about the second?*

BARZINI: The blind revolt against the industrial

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world by the people who want the fruits of the industrial world but will not accept its dullness and discipline is surprising enough. But the number of the same people regularly voting Communist, as if Communism were the answer, is still more surprising. Certainly Communism provides a minimum of economic security, and we must admit that for people who do not have independent ideas, who are happy to be told what to do, and find reassurance in believing what the papers say, the Communist Welfare/Police State functions admirably—better than capitalist Welfare societies. On the other hand, why should people who rebel against the semi-regimented society of the capitalist or mixed-economy state yearn after a *totally* regimented and economically inferior life as a solution to their problem? If men are alienated by "regimentation" in West European society, they will be (and are) much more drastically alienated in the Communist world.

The answer is that a great part of the Italian rank-and-file Communists are Communist in name only. At heart they belong to the feudal order. They dream of a return to the security of the man who had his place in society established at birth and could neither regress nor progress from it. One of the main issues in all our labour troubles is the workers' absolute refusal to be dismissed, even though they would be receiving *ex gratia* payments amounting almost to their total normal earnings. They do not want to be made redundant even when their factory is on the verge of bankruptcy or has indeed gone bankrupt. These people are, in effect, serfs—they look upon themselves as peasants belonging to the land, bound to the Duke, to his family and his castle. The "duke" is expected to feed them and house them whether the crop is good or bad; he cannot get rid of them any more than the duke of the 12th century could get rid of his bondsmen.

In a way this is very admirable, but it goes against the whole modern world—the modern world as it was until yesterday morning (I do not know what it is going to be like by 5 p.m. tomorrow). This world as it exists in Western Europe and the USA is a world of merit. It believes in a fluid society in which some men rise according to their ability and their industry and others sink because they show no talent and application. A fluid society also means that workers are shifted from activities which have become economically less important to those which are growing in importance or are likely to grow in the future. This the Italian workers refuse to accept, they not only do not want to be dismissed; they not only do not want to be shifted from one kind of work to another—but even within the same factory they will not be moved from one workshop to another.

—You are painting an uncannily accurate picture of conditions in British industry. . . .

BARZINI: Now this obstinate immobility, this love of security driven to its absurd extremes, is proof (and here the British case is historically different) that the Italian masses have not been touched by the liberal revolution of the 19th century. The Italian worker is frightened by the idea of mobility. He thinks that every man should have a stable position—he should neither be promoted because he is a better man than his neighbour, nor should he be demoted because he is worse. He wants to be a link in a large chain of services and duties—no more.

—If Italian egalitarianism and immobility are a hangover from the serf's attitude to his duke, then the Italian worker will feel both very much at home in a Communist system, and very much at odds with it. At home, because serfdom—that is, the enforced egalitarianism of the ordinary worker (tempered by the theft of the "duke's" property)—is a fact under Soviet Communism. At odds, because the inequalities in pay and privileges between the worker and his superiors are larger and socially much more offensive in the Soviet Union than they are in England or Sweden for example. He will get the worst of both worlds.

Communism is what Communism does. Is the Italian public aware that under any Communist régime we can study and draw conclusions from, the ordinary man's liberty is reduced, not only to the kind of serfdom the Italian worker might willingly tolerate because it gives him economic security, but to a serfdom involving his whole person, 24 hours a day, seven days a week?

BARZINI: This is a large question. Liberty in the Anglo-Saxon conception is the rule of law. Elsewhere liberty is the sum total of the interplay of certain institutions. In Italy, the concept of liberty is very different.

Liberty—that is, the autonomy of the individual—is guaranteed neither by the rule of law nor by checks-and-balances between institutions but by the individual's private capacity to defend himself. And this private capacity hinges on his ability, not to *avail* himself of the rule of law, but to *defy* it. It is when society is in a state of chaos and the state under uncertain leadership that the liberty of the individual is most easily attained. The Italian knows that the law is an ass, and that he has to have powerful friends to protect himself. Therefore an authoritarian régime holds no special terrors for him.

Remember that fascism was once defined as "totalitarianism tempered by disrespect for the law." This is the typically Italian formula. It is not very dignified, because it involves the individual in hiring and bribing protectors, flattering men he may despise at heart, and doing favours to people in the expectation that he will be shown favours in return. But it explains why the

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prospect of Communism does not strike nearly as much fear into the hearts of Italians as it would strike into the hearts of people in Britain where freedom has an ancient, almost religious, value. The Italian is confident that he can, by clever management, find a cosy niche for himself under Communism, corrupt the law, and outwit its guardians. It is an old Italian tradition to accept the tyrant with the inevitability of an act of God—but with this acceptance goes another tradition: the Italian's unwritten right to disobey the tyrant, sabotage his regulations, violate his laws, and finally put him down. This too is a dialectic—Italian-style.

3. *Of National Character*

REMEMBERING *your warning that Dante must be thoroughly assimilated before Italians could be understood,*[2] *I took some trouble to inform myself on how Dante deals with the idea of liberty. And I found that "liberty" does not occur in* The Divine Comedy: *there is sin and absolution; crime and righteousness; grace, damnation, love and salvation—but not liberty.*

Should this astonish us? Doesn't a religious universe imply a total commitment which, while it may give us inner freedom, must nevertheless (or, indeed, for that reason) deny us certain personal liberties in the sense of freedom from? *There is, in the mediaeval Christian world, no room for the modern European liberal's demand to be free from the constraints of authority—whether of the state or the church.*

If Dante is, as you say, the key to the Italian mind, and if we consider that Rome was the seat of the Counter-Reformation—wouldn't the modern Italian's lack of expectation to find individual freedom guaranteed and enforced by law also have to do with the whole climate of Italy's cultural and religious history? Couldn't one then say that the acceptance of Communism by large sections of the Italian people is due not so much to Italian fatalism, as to the fact that, having been historically conditioned by the dogmatism and unfreedom of one Church, the Italians take rather naturally to the dogmatism and unfreedom of another—Communism?

BARZINI: There is no doubt that countries such as Italy and Spain, which carry in their history the legacy of the Counter-Reformation with its emphasis on dogma and authority, are more open to modern totalitarian thinking—whether of the Left or of the Right—than countries which do not carry that burden. The Italians in particular are not only *children* of the Counter-Reformation but the progenitors of it. The Church which came out of the Council of Trent and has shaped the Italian character was, at the same time, shaped by the Italian character, so that in Italy the Catholic matrix has a double potency and is much stronger than in Poland, or Ireland, or Austria, where "Josefismus" protected the Austrian state's prerogatives against the incursions of the Church.

Then we must remember that the unification of Italy was achieved in war against both Austria and the Church. Let us not forget that Massimo d'Azeglio, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sardinia, an Italian patriot who supported the *Risorgimento*, had the Archbishop of Turin locked up in a fortress for being hostile to one of the laws of his kingdom—and this despite the fact that Massimo d'Azeglio was a devout Catholic and brother of an eminent and influential Jesuit. Let us also not forget that Cavour, Victor Emmanuel II, and the other leaders of the *Risorgimento* were excommunicated by the Church; that Cavour, on his death-bed, could not be given final absolution, until a personal friend who was a priest took it upon himself to give Cavour extreme unction and was severely punished for his pains by the Vatican!

The unification of Italy meant the opening up of Italy to the modern world: railways connecting the southernmost parts of Sicily with France and Switzerland; the free movement of goods and trade across the Alps; and the arrival in Italy of modern thought. For the Church this heralded the spread of the miasma of liberalism, duly condemned in a series of encyclicals by Pope Pius IX, and culminating in his famous "Syllabus of Errors" appended to *Quanta Cura* of 1864:

> **". . . they fear not to uphold that erroneous opinion most pernicious to the Catholic Church and the salvation of souls, which was called by our predecessor, Gregory XVI . . . the insanity: namely, 'that the liberty of conscience and of worship is the peculiar (or inalienable) right of every man, should be proclaimed by law, and that citizens have the right to all kinds of liberty, to be restrained by no law, whether ecclesiastical or civil, by which they may be enabled to manifest openly and publicly their ideas, by word of mouth, through the press, or by any other means.'"**

Read and marvel, for these words were written only a hundred years ago.

—To be fair, though, the Syllabus was followed, in 1891, under Leo XIII, by another famous encyclical, Rerum Novarum *(The Condition of the Working Class). While this was no liberal document—it was, in fact, the Church's official answer to Marxism—it addressed itself with great seriousness, and in radical language, to the misery and wretchedness of the workers:*

> **". . . hence . . . it has come to pass that working men have been surrendered, all isolated and helpless, to the hard-heartedness of employers and the greed of unchecked competition. The mischief has been increased by rapacious usury, which, although more**

[2] Cf. "Dante, the Italians and the PCI", *Survey* (London), Spring 1976.

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than once condemned by the Church, is nevertheless, under a different guise, but with the like injustice, still practiced by covetous and grasping men. To this must be added the custom of working by contract, and the concentration of so many branches of trade in the hands of a few individuals; so that a small number of very rich men have been able to lay upon the teeming masses of the labouring poor a yoke little better than that of slavery itself. . . ."

This encyclical, too, deserves our surprise for it was written 15 years before the foundation of the British Labour Party and 26 years before the Bolshevik Revolution.

BARZINI: Of course, the Church has greatly changed since the Syllabus of Pius IX. *Rerum Novarum* was considered to be a revolutionary document—which it was—though it was entirely consonant with the cardinal message of Christianity: the care of the weak, the poor, and the oppressed. At the same time, the encyclical had a direct appeal to that streak of conservativism in working-class thinking which expresses itself in revulsion against industrial society and a nostalgia for the stable, even if illiberal, order of the pre-industrial era. The Roman Church, itself hostile to the rationalism and liberalism of the French Revolution and its aftermath, and itself thirsting for the return of a stable world, could therefore readily appeal to working-class conservativism, while also subjecting to its strictures the abuses of 19th-century capitalism. It spoke of a just society according to the divine law—not the liberal conscience—but stability has always been its principal concern. Remember that some of the most eminent Italian Catholics rallied to the corporate state under the fascist régime, because they thought corporativism signalled the end of liberal politics and a return to the stable world of pre-industrial society.

—We have digressed . . . the analogy I am interested in is between the church-like dogmatism and intolerance of Communism, and the dogmatism of the Catholic Church itself. Are the Italian people more likely to embrace the authoritarianism of the Communist system because they have been shaped by the authoritarianism of the Catholic Church? You mentioned the excommunication of Cavour and other leaders of the Risorgimento. *In 1978, Santiago Carrillo seems to be a likely candidate for excommunication by the Eastern Papacy. The air is thick with the language of anathema, and the Spanish Communists see Moscow's recent attacks on Carrillo precisely as a prelude to excommunication. "The* New Times' *article" [of 23 June 1977], wrote the leading Spanish Communist, Manuel Azcarate, in July 1977,*

"represents a return to those periods in which the Communist Party of the Soviet Union considered that it had the right to intervene in the affairs of other parties and to launch anathemas and excommunications, as in this case, as if it were a Communist Holy Office, with the right to define what is truth and what is error, where orthodoxy lies, and what is heterodoxy."

The question then arises: if Carrillo, why not Berlinguer or Amendola or Kanapa or any other Communist who happens to be out of line with the prevailing orthodoxy at home or in Moscow?

BARZINI: It is very difficult to know what the Communists are up to in Italy. If I were a Communist, I would obviously make the same speeches they are making and proclaim the same ends they are proclaiming. This does not necessarily mean they are insincere. Communists in Italy will tell you that they stand for pluralism and the fundamental bourgeois liberties—and deep in their hearts they hope that what they say may be true. After all, they are Western men of culture who know perfectly well that the bourgeois conquests of the 19th century were not bourgeois conquests at all but the conquests of man, human achievements. At the same time they are riveted to their ideology. They believe they have the key to history and therefore to the future, and that any deviation from orthodox Marxism which is not a tactical detour to avoid some temporary difficulty is a mistake and dangerous to the forward march of humanity. Therefore I do not know whether the present "liberal" line in Italian Communism is here to stay.

What I can see at the moment is that the Communist Party avoids stressing, or even mentioning, the class struggle; that the bourgeoisie is fully accepted; and that a great many members of the middle class vote Communist. The Party has now become a tacit supporter of the Christian Democratic government and indeed the principal pillar of an arrangement that amounts in fact to co-determination in government. All this means an emasculation of the Party's revolutionary message, a dilution of the promise of the working man's paradise, daily admissions of the mistakes and culpable shortsightedness of Soviet-type régimes, the re-evaluation of the revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries, and good relations with the Social Democrats.

Of course, the bug of dogmatism inherited from the Catholic Church is there—otherwise Marxism would not have struck such fertile ground in Italy. But whether and to what extent the Italian Communists' attachment to ideology would peel off under the pressure of responsibility is difficult to say. Certainly their reluctance to attempt to rule single-handed is due in large part to the very realistic consideration that as long as they are in opposition—or, at any rate, not in office—they can always defend themselves against Soviet attack by insisting that

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the heterodox and offensive things they are saying and doing are dictated by the exigencies of being in opposition. But once they have attained government responsibility they would—they realise—become extremely vulnerable to Soviet pressure. The Russians could—so they fear—push them in any direction they wanted. Now the Italian Communists, precisely because their dogmatism is heavily suffused with realism, are terrified of being forced to repeat Soviet errors. They do think the Russians have not enough political culture and understanding for the subtleties of Western Europe and could not begin to tender useful advice.

—There is, in in any case, a good deal of doubt surrounding the Party's ultimate will to be *wholly independent from Moscow. Luigi Longo's remarkable article in* Pravda *(27 July 1977), with its panegyric to Soviet power and experience, is in stark contrast to other Italian Communist utterances, to say nothing of the statements of Santiago Carrillo and Manuel Azcarate.*

> **"It is indisputable [writes the Chairman of the Italian Communist Party] that the existence and growth of the Soviet Union as a great international force has been a decisive factor in transforming the very face of our planet. The USSR knocked the weapons from the hands of the most aggressive forces of imperialism, narrowed the field for its manoeuvre and its omnipotence in the international arena. . . ."**

This does not sound to me like the voice of a politician ready to man the defences of NATO *in a conflict with the Soviet Union.*

4. *Elites & Masses*

I NEVER CEASE *to be surprised at the small size and almost incestuous character of those political, economic and military coteries that make opinion and decide national policies in the Western world. (Henry Kissinger, we are informed by Art Buchwald, used to carry American foreign policy safely wrapped in his briefcase, and both Presidents Nixon and Ford needed all their powers of persuasion to get the foreign policy periodically unpacked and dusted down for inspection.) In Britain and the US, editorial opinion of the kind that matters, for example on Soviet affairs, is decided by half-a-dozen leader-writers; by making three telephone calls in the middle of the afternoon, one can obtain a fairly precise picture of what "British opinion" is going to be the following morning.*

All this goes a fortiori *for the Communist régimes—but it also goes for the non-ruling Communist parties, even those which no longer set great store by democratic centralism, such as the Italian and French. Luigi Longo's article is a case in point. As he is Chairman of the Italian Party, what he says clearly matters. He obviously represents someone or something—but what? Most probably only himself and a very small band of like-minded colleagues in the Party élite. Nevertheless, his utterances in* Pravda *bear all the marks of a policy statement which might influence both the Soviet and the American evaluations of Italian Communist intentions. The Party delegation led by Pajetta a few weeks before Longo's visit to the Soviet Union also represented something—"the Party" we are told—yet* its *attitude to Soviet policies was greatly at variance with what Longo said and omitted saying. Berlinguer, Amendola and Napolitano speak yet another language, supported (as one gathers) by cabals of their own.*

Where in all this does the little man come in? It is perhaps as well that he does not realise, or does not care to know, to what extent his personal fortunes, indeed his survival, are subject to decisions made by a few men in his name but without him. Arnold Toynbee's grim warning: "No annihilation without representation" is as relevant today as it was when he first gave it in 1947. All the heady talk about co-determination and participation appears to have done little to widen the base of decision-making. Lenin's, Mussolini's and Hitler's shared formula—that rival élites propel the cart of history—has lost none of its relevance. Undoubtedly, Western élites are a great deal more accountable—and thus much easier to boot out—than their opposite numbers in Soviet Europe, and this is no small advantage (consider the rule of the Ceausescu dynasty in "socialist" Rumania.[3]*)*

But I am nevertheless a little disturbed to see, in America for example, the same men wearing so many different hats: one day as scholars, the next as ambassadors, then again as Senators, members of some Presidential task force, leader-writers, strategic analysts, television interviewers, consultants to politically loaded foundations—the list is almost endless.

Looking at the Italian scene, past and present, I would have thought the Italians were not much more even-handed in the management of power and the perks of power, whether on the Left or the Right.

BARZINI: If you are quarrelling with the human condition, I can offer little constructive advice. Effective power has a way of eluding partici-

[3] Nicolae Ceausescu, President of the State Council, Secretary General of the Communist Party, Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces; Elena (wife), Member of the Politburo, Member of the Central Committee, Member of the Executive Committee of the Communist Party, Director of the National Institute of Chemistry, Member of the Academy; Zoe Elena (daughter), leading member of the Institute of Inventions "Henri Coanda"; Nicu (son), Secretary of the Communist Youth Union; Valentin (son), leading member of the Institute of Nuclear Physics; Ilie (brother), Major General, Deputy Secretary of the Higher Political Council of the Army, Professor of History at the Military Academy; Ion (son), Deputy Minister of Agriculture; Flores (son), correspondent of *Scinteia*; Marin (brother), Head of Rumanian Economic Agency in Vienna; Corneliu Burtica (nephew), Deputy Prime Minister, Member of the Politburo, Member of the Executive Committee; Ion Ionita (nephew), Deputy Prime Minister; Manea Manescu (brother-in-law), Prime Minister; Jonas Fazekas (father-in-law of son Valentin), Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Internal Trade, Member of the Executive Committee; Ilie Verdet (brother-in-law), Member of the Politburo, Member of Executive Committee, Member of the Central Committee.

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pation by large numbers, whatever the claims of co-determination and the like may be. The broad policies of a governing party are determined by its elected members of Parliament—that, at least, is the theory. In reality, policy is made by the government. But as governments are too large, policy is effectively made by the Cabinet. If the Cabinet itself is either too cumbersome or not of one mind, the real source of power lies in the hands of the prime minister and a small number of his closest political friends. And if this kind of consensus too is difficult to attain, power often rests solely in the hands of the prime minister. One can observe the same phenomenon in local elections and in the trade union system. As long as we have representative, rather than plebiscitary, democracy, this is one of the penalties we have to pay.

—And, of course, many would not agree that it is a penalty.

BARZINI: Quite. To quote a familiar example: the unification of Italy was certainly the work of a very small number of men. It was a minority that fought the temporal power of the Church; and it is a minority, ideologically not unrelated to the earlier one, that is fighting to prevent a Communist take-over today. Certainly history is the story of minorities speaking in the name of majorities—supposed or real (the father of this idea was Pareto, at whose feet, at the University of Lausanne, the young Mussolini imbibed his élitism). What is more surprising and even enigmatic is the psychological process whereby the views of a handful of men suddenly become part of the public consciousness—an idea catches fire and changes history. In 1848 a tiny minority of enthusiasts attempted to unify Italy through revolution—and failed. Yet, eleven years later, most of the Italian middle class rallied to support what had appeared to them, in 1848, a derisory obsession. Most Italians did not like the idea of unification, because it meant centralised government, unitary legislation, taxes that could not be easily evaded, and so on. Yet, in those eleven years, the protagonists of the *Risorgimento* managed to convince the Italian people that unification was, at any rate, the smaller of two evils.

In the mid-1920s it was obvious that no one particularly liked fascism in Italy except the fascists themselves. But many people of sound common sense—bourgeois people, good patriots, solid citizens, workers—thought at a certain moment that if they had to choose between anarchy and misgovernment fuelled by revolutionary socialists, on the one hand, and orderly government, albeit under fascism, on the other, they had to opt for fascism.

—Paradoxically perhaps, the chief claim today of representing law and order comes from the Italian Communists, and they may yet ride to power on it. I find this surprising, not because one doubts that Communism can enforce law and order—Stalin's Russia was a highly orderly place—but because the Communists cannot dissociate themselves from the heritage of a murderous Communist past. The fascists were able to say that they had never been tried in government—a feeble claim, no doubt, but not irrational. But the Communists can claim nothing of the sort—they have ruled the Soviet Union for sixty and the East/Central European countries for thirty years; and the results are a catalogue of mismanagement and horrors unparalleled for scale in human history.

And yet, in large parts of Western Europe, the thrust of history would seem to be on their side—one day because the Communists say they represent law and order, the next because they claim to represent revolution, the third because they stand for a combination of both by some subtle quirk of the dialectic. That the Communists in Western Europe try to be all things to all people does not surprise me. But I am a little astonished that there should be, in Lenin's fine phrase, so many "useful idiots" in the non-Communist public. Surely "useful idiocy" is not an Italian characteristic. Whatever qualities there may be lacking in Italian political culture, it has never been short of a robust scepticism.

BARZINI: Communism has had a certain success in underdeveloped, non-industrialised societies because it promises to be a short-cut to industrialisation and higher living standards. Italy, too, is, partly at least, a developing country. Then, many people do hope that Communism represents order—an important point when kidnapping, violence, and general lawlessness are becoming widespread. There is also the quest for egalitarianism, security, and a stability reminiscent of feudal society of which I have already spoken: you are a member of an enormous guild where your place is established, you know what sort of wage to expect, you know your station in society, and you hope for modest progress in both—no more. You are, if you like, free because you are unfree—besides, who really cares for freedom?

I don't think the Italian people are "useful idiots", but they dislike and fear uncertainty more than they fear authoritarian rule. And in this they are not alone. To the extent that the Soviet system is accepted in Russia, it is accepted on the same basis. The Chinese, too, have put up with the most regimented and least palatable system the modern world has known, because they can fill their bellies at regular times and put a shirt on their backs. That they all wear the same clothes, and eat the same food, and listen to the same admonitions in the May 7 Schools does not worry them unduly—not at their present stage of development anyhow. What you have said of the

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murderous character of the Soviet Communist system is, of course, true—but the Italians feel (in Sinclair Lewis' old phrase) "it can't happen here", because Italians are not Russians, because the Italian Party is not burdened with the heritage of centuries of Czarism, and because Italians are great believers in the perhaps frivolous motto that things are never as bad as you fear, and never as good as you hope. It is not much of a political philosophy, but it is the only one we have.

—We are perhaps also witnessing a typical swing in the pendulum action of the collective psyche. When you are in a good situation, you want to be in a bad situation so that you can engage all your energies to attain a good situation. People dissatisfied with the relative uncertainties of a free bourgeois order hanker after the prison-like certainties of a tyrannical order, and vice versa. Of all the regularities historians claim to be able to detect in history, this is the only kind which appears to be fully attested.

BARZINI: Yes, this oscillation is part of human nature. If you spend (as I often do) all day in a sailing boat, and the weather is rough, and you feel the strain at the wheel, all you want is to find a quiet estuary and cast anchor. But no sooner have you spent an hour in port than you want to get the hell out because the calm surface of the water and the steadiness of your boat get on your nerves. Yes—a man navigating treacherous waters wants nothing but security, food, and sleep—and when he has them, all he wants is hardship and adventure. You cannot satisfy the beast.

But there is another defect, apart from insecurity, in Western liberal society: freedom ends up boring people. Peace is boring, an upright life is boring, efficiency is boring, the organisation of a well-run factory is boring, so that there is, in our desperate attempt to change what we have, also a search for excitement. This is especially true of the young whose overflowing energies demand tension and the release of tension. They do not realise, because they are by and large ignorant of history, what it would mean living without the freedoms they now take for granted.

There is yet another factor, still more depressing: man's sheer ill-will, his *Schadenfreude* at seeing his neighbour harmed and brought low. Do not forget that most people do not really want to live a better life themselves, but they are delighted if no one else can live a better life either. They will risk poverty, danger, and even death to see that their rivals or those they consider to be their class enemies suffer as much as they suffer themselves, and preferably more. If I believed in original sin, I would say this is what it is.

For all these often conflicting reasons—some rational, others visceral—Communism has an appeal in Italy which political scientists and sociologists cannot possibly understand without immersing themselves in the whole of Italian culture. It is difficult enough for *us* to make sense of it—it is a hopeless task for the behaviouralist or sociological model-builder.

—Talking to one of the self-exiled leaders of the "Prague Spring" the other day, I asked him whether he still considered himself to be a Communist. "Oh, yes", he said, "but I have come to the conclusion that if I want to find out what is happening in history, I read Shakespeare—not Marx."

BARZINI: Yes, the key to Italian fascism and Communism too is not to be found in the tracts of Gentile or Gramsci, but rather in Cola di Rienzo's gigantism, Guicciardini's art of survival, and Cagliostro's benevolent make-believe. "Past things shed light on future ones", Guicciardini wrote in the 16th century, "the same things come back, but under different names and colours. . . ." If you want to understand the minds of Berlinguer and Andreotti and the springs of civil disorder in Italy in 1978, read Benvenuto Cellini's account of life in Florence under Cosima de Medici and Pope Clement VII.

5. *The Illiberal Counter-Revolution*

THE LAST 20 years or so have made all of us in Western Europe acutely conscious of the fragility of liberal democracy. We can now see that it has struck no lasting roots anywhere outside Western Europe, North America and the former white dominions of the British Empire; and even in these minority regions of the world it is threatened. Taking a large enough view of history, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that liberal democracy, whether in classical Greece or our own time, depends on the coalescence of so many fortunate conditions that it is its survival, rather than its absence, that has to be explained. Fortunately, the "crisis" of liberal democracy has been with us for so long that I tend to take the present cries of havoc with a pinch of salt. The question is: how large a pinch of salt? Writing in 1930, Ortega y Gasset said in The Revolt of the Masses:

> **"The political doctrine which has represented the loftiest endeavour towards common life is liberal democracy. . . . Liberalism is that principle of political rights, according to which the public authority, in spite of being all-powerful, limits itself and attempts, even at its own expense, to leave room in the State over which it rules for those to live who neither think nor feel as it does, that is to say as do the stronger, the majority. Liberalism . . . is the supreme form of generosity; it is the right which the majority concedes to the minority and hence it is the noblest cry that has ever resounded in this planet. It announces the determination to share existence with the enemy; more than that, with an enemy which is**

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weak. It was incredible that the human species should have arrived at so noble an attitude . . . so anti-natural. . . . Hence it is not to be wondered at that this same humanity should soon appear anxious to get rid of it. It is a discipline too difficult and complex to take firm root on earth."

My own reaction to Ortega is split into a "minority report" and a "majority opinion." The first tells me that the successful transition of Spain, Greece, and Portugal from authoritarianism to democracy is proof, albeit very new and untested, that liberal democracy is not quite so exceptional and unnatural a plant as Ortega tended to believe. And if we think of the "Prague Spring" and of Imre Nagy's programme in the second week of the 1956 Hungarian revolution, perhaps our doubts about the resilience of liberal democracy under totalitarian dictatorship should also be tempered.

My "majority opinion", however, inclines me to think that Ortega is right—the fine hope of the 19th century, that the good of individual liberty is self-evident and irresistible, has been gravely disappointed by Nazism, Communism, and the failure of liberal-democratic values to take root anywhere in the ex-colonial world. Auschwitz, the Gulag, *Amin, Bokassa, the Khmer Rouge, and the Chinese ant-state represent, in their different ways, the greatest and ghastliest holocaust mankind has yet experienced.*

My personal hunch is that future historians will look upon the tolerant and civilised ways in which a small minority of mankind ordered its affairs in the Westernmost tip of the Euro-Asian continent in the last quarter of the 20th century as miraculous and as "anti-natural" as miracles tend to be. Our age will seem to them to have been the lost paradise in much the same way as the Athens of Pericles seems to us to have been a unique meeting place of tolerance, culture, and courage.

How do you as an Italian **liberale***—both with a capital* L *and with a small one—see the chances of the survival of liberal democracy?*

BARZINI: The 19th-century liberals were, of course, speaking from their own experience. They expected to see what we would today call an élitist régime elected by and governing a homogeneous people. They had decapitated or excluded from power the old nobility and were oppressing and exploiting the proletariat. For a parliament elected by people believing more or less the same things and sharing the same cultural background it was easy to debate matters in a decorous manner and to come up with convincing and broadly accepted answers.

All this has now changed. Universal suffrage has created a parliament in which the people's representatives do not just disagree on points of detail while agreeing on fundamentals, but clash head-on on basic principles. For example, the Communist opposition in Italy (which represents about 30% of the electorate) questions not whether taxes on children's wear should go up or down, but whether the whole edifice of the existing social order should be blown up and brought down. They envisage what they call a socialist society, but (for all the Italian Communists' vaunted "gentle touch" and gradualism) this society would not be a liberal society. So the question is: are parliamentary democracy and the rule of law—for that is what we are talking about when we say "liberal"—firm enough to resist the dangers surrounding the liberal system?

I am a little sceptical but not without hope. We have already seen the destruction of two totalitarian régimes—Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy. We are witnessing in Western Europe a type of Communism which—perhaps for tactical reasons, perhaps because Western Communists are more intelligent than their Eastern comrades, perhaps simply because they are not in power—cannot afford to be dogmatic, and which has to modify its message, ideas and methods right across the board. Moreover, even in the Soviet Union, where Stalin could get away with the slaughter of millions, an invisible hand—call it the spirit of our time, or public opinion—is putting restraints on the actions of the Communist leaders.

I am, therefore, in two minds about your question for the same kinds of reasons you are. Ortega y Gasset may be right, but I hope he is wrong. Certainly liberal democracy demands uncommon sophistication from the individual and places great demands on every citizen's sense of responsibility and fair play. Qualities of this sort are not to be found in many societies, and are often not prized high where they exist. At the same time, in the US we can see a society which is, by European standards, almost classless—bankers and workers sharing the same clothes, tastes and language and, what is more important, sharing, and willing to protect, the institutions of liberal democracy.

Then, there are hopeful signs in Southern Europe to which you have already referred. Only a few years ago, Italy was the only Mediterranean country where parliamentary democracy survived. Today Spain, Portugal and Greece have returned to the fold and have done so without bloody upheavals. Nobody, of course, believed that the colonial people in Africa and Asia would turn themselves overnight into impeccable Anglo-Saxon democracies, even though Anglo-Saxon democracy itself is, God knows, far from being impeccable. I would, therefore, sum up by saying that—yes, there are reasons for despair, but there are also reasons for hope.

—Benedetto Croce, your great compatriot and teacher, believed that illiberal systems are barren and ineffectual, that history is the history of freedom, and that we have no reason to resign ourselves to a new era of barbarism. Writing in 1940, he said in a memorable sentence:

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"The time when freedom is dead or dying in others is the time when she should resume the weaving of her tapestry before the thinker's mind."

Croce, it seems to me, was in the fortunate position of writing of liberty at a time when liberty in the world was in short supply or non-existent. His words had a natural appeal. He united, true to his philosophy, the thinker and doer in his own person ("a thinker who does not suffer his problem ... is a mere elocutionist"). But once freedom in its public aspects is tolerably established, as it is in the Western liberal democracies, it becomes extremely difficult to write of freedom with Croce's sense of religious dedication. In the first case you are in the psychologically rewarding position of wanting to be free from *something—regimentation, thought-control, Lenin, Hitler, Stalin. In the second case, however, you have to answer the more difficult and existential question: what shall I do with my freedom? What am I* able *to do with my freedom? It is, therefore, much easier for us in the late 1970s to offer gratuitous advice to the people of Eastern Europe about the evils of Soviet oppression than it is to take a hard look at our own freedom and ask ourselves: Why has it gone sour on us? Why are we so little prepared to make sacrifices for it? And above all, what is it for?*

BARZINI: Liberty is a fugitive target; it is never fully attained; the battle for it is perennial. Sometimes the battle is fought on the barricades, as in 1848 throughout Europe, as in 1956 in Budapest or, in milder form, in Prague in 1968. But the most difficult struggle for freedom takes place in the privacy of man's soul. The challenge is: how do I act as an autonomous being?

How do I reconcile my autonomy with my responsibility as a member of society, without becoming a sheep in a shepherd's flock, a mere number in a mass of unthinking and uncritical human machines? How do I resist the herd impulse of politics and fashion? This battle in every one of us, for the mastery of our own soul, is what liberty is about. It cannot be guaranteed by statutes and constitutions. You can legislate for it; but if the ordinary people have not attained that maturity of the human spirit, and that degree of civilisation which are the conditions of man's inner liberty, all your laws and constitutions will be worthless.

To give you an example: under the fascist régime there was not as much official censorship of the press as people thought, but there was an inner self-censorship by the journalists themselves who disliked being suspected of hostility to the régime and were anxious to be on the right side of powerful people. Their readiness to please went way beyond what the fascist leaders themselves wanted or expected. The struggle against the temptation to take the easy but illiberal and dishonourable way out is the struggle for our inner freedom.

Today, the Italian press is free in the sense that there is no censorship. But if you read our papers you at once realise that eight out of ten newspapers have already succumbed to the temptation of preemptive capitulation—that they are trimming their sails to what they think will be the wishes of their *next* masters, the Communist Party. At the time of Mussolini, Italy resounded to the cry: "*Mussolini ha sempre ragione*"—Mussolini is always right. Try to find in the Italian press today articles critical of the Communist-dominated trade unions! There aren't any. That the trade unions are responsible for most of our inflation and the economic crisis does not seem to matter. What does is that no journalist who knows what is good for him will attach his name to a critical analysis of trade union practices.

—I have heard it said by Professor Rosario Romeo that self-appointed local soviets—"redaction committees"—exercise a form of collective censorship over most of the Italian press, in addition to the prophylactic self-censorship of individual journalists.

BARZINI: Not only that—there is also the "works committee", which includes the printers, who have the final say in what gets printed and what does not. Editors, journalists and writers, realising that these censorships exist, very seldom dare risk their jobs by challenging the powers that be. Therefore the "redaction committee" and the "works council" need not throw their weight around—their work is done for them by the fear they inspire.

—I understand most Italian papers and journals will not publish you although you are one of Italy's best known writers. Even La Stampa *would apparently not carry your articles on the grounds that, though you are acceptable to the editor, you are not acceptable to the various works committees.*

BARZINI: That is so—the big Italian papers which are dominated by these committees, and thus indirectly by the Communist Party, will not publish me, much less employ me.

—On what grounds do they oppose you?

BARZINI: When I was named editor-in-chief of *Il Messaggero* in 1976, I was prevented from taking up my responsibilities because the "redaction committee" objected to my person. They said they would only accept an editor who had an anti-fascist past, was a democrat and a "lay" person—that is, outside the political influence of the Church.

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Well, the proof of my anti-fascism was my arrest and imprisonment in 1940. . . .

—Weren't you also under sentence of death at one stage?

BARZINI: Well, there was some talk about it, that was all. After the War, I was a Deputy for the Liberal Party which was, of course, anti-fascist and opposed to the political power of the Church; and, needless to say, I was a democrat. I have always tried to do what was necessary to make democracy work—and very hard work it is, too. I suppose the Committee did not want to have me because I could not be trusted to toe the Communist line on what constitutes "anti-fascism" and how its implications are to be put into action.

—The average Italian journalist or editor is, then, not struggling very successfully with his conscience. He is far from satisfying Croce's definition of freedom "as a moral principle and therefore the only freedom."

BARZINI: Broadly speaking, this is so: yet there are also heroes among us—obscure men and women who are sacrificing their chances of advancement and of making a career purely because they cannot be disloyal to themselves. Italy is not exclusively a country of opportunists. There are, and there were under fascism, brave men whose stand would have been understood and honoured in foreign countries much more than they are here.

—What we must not forget is that when Croce used the word freedom, he was not thinking of the misuse of freedom by anarchists, urban guerrillas, hippy colonies and egalitarian socialists. He specifically pinpointed the "real" freedom which Communism offers, by virtue of its theoretically egalitarian economic organisation, as no freedom at all. As a supporter of the strong liberal state, he firmly restricted liberty to those who are "neither wicked nor criminal nor insane nor inexperienced and immature." He would have nothing in his state that would facilitate "the excesses of people who are subject in one way or another to bestial unrestraint, madness, childishness, ignorance, or the like." At a time when much of our society is ruled by ignorance, unrestraint and immaturity, Croce's liberalism strikes me as admirably disciplined and highly desirable.

BARZINI: Croce was a Hegelian who believed in a strong "ethical state." But as soon as one has said this, one has to define what one means by a "strong" state. Was the fascist state a "strong" state? Is the Communist state in Poland a "strong" state?

I doubt it. Both are at base pitifully weak because they rest on coercion. As you mentioned Croce's almost religious faith in liberty—my candidate for a "strong" state would be, symbolically speaking, the Canton of Geneva where, going back for centuries, democracy has been intrinsically and inseparably connected with religion—the governing body of Geneva is supported by the unconscious consensus of the totality of its citizens. But a strong state need not be formally democratic. The old Prussian monarchy, where loyalty to the prince, military virtue, and certain survivals of feudal mentality were upheld with devotion by the whole population, was also a strong state. And if you take Italy, undoubtedly Venice, which was a Republic, was an extremely strong state in its heyday because its citizens, too, shared certain values and beliefs, even though these did not amount to a religion or an overriding sense of patriotism.

—This kind of unconscious, one might almost say subliminal, consensus is, of course, what totalitarian régimes are most anxious to create. Hence brainwashing, thought-control, the Big Lie, and the rest. Italian fascism, though not a fully totalitarian régime, was trying to do likewise and received the support, at least in its early years, of people like Benedetto Croce himself.

BARZINI: Yes. The fascists believed that Italy, a nation of anarchic sentiments, chaos and indiscipline, could be turned into a homogeneous people by dictatorial rule. The hope was that the Italy of tomorrow would be more solid and more civilised because there would be tacit agreement on fundamentals. This was not an unworthy or even an entirely chimerical ambition, and the reason why many people of intelligence and integrity supported fascism for a time—among them, for a short time, Benedetto Croce—was that they sincerely believed that the fascists ought to be given a chance, despite the visible defects of fascism. Renzo de Felice's distinction between "Fascism" and "National-Socialism" rests largely on this point—fascism being a rather forward-looking social movement, with survivals of the liberal creed of the French Revolution as part of its tradition, while Nazism was a backward-looking product of German myths and barbarism.[4]

—One remembers Mussolini's severe condemnation of National Socialism after the murder of Dollfuss. "Hitler is the murderer of Dollfuss", he said to Prince Starhemberg in the summer of 1934. Nazism was "a revolution of the old Germanic tribes of the primeval forest against the Latin civilisation of Rome. Certainly there are outward similarities [between Fascism and Nazism]. Both are authoritarian systems, both are collectivist, socialistic. Both systems oppose liberalism. But Fascism . . . recognises the right of the individual, it recognises religion and family. National Socialism, on the other hand, is savage barbarism; in common

[4] See, for the difficulties of this position, François Bondy, "Arguing about Fascism", ENCOUNTER, December 1975.

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with barbarian hordes it allows no rights to the individual; the chieftain is lord over the life and death of his people. Murder, and killing, loot and pillage and blackmail are all it can produce. . . ."

Now you have said the fascist régime attempted to create a broad measure of popular consensus. It seems to me the Italian Communists are trying to do the same, even though their definition of "people" is at variance with the fascist idea. The question that interests me at this point is: if we accept some ancient notions of what constitutes a "people", we are forced to say that the populations of most contemporary mass-societies, the Italian included, would not qualify. For Cicero, for example, the populus *of the Roman* respublica *was a "people" by virtue of the fact that all its members subscribed to a common code of justice and pursued a common interest. For St Augustine, the worship of a common divinity, in addition to the two Ciceronian conditions, is what makes for a true people. In other words, a people for him is a religious as well as a legal society; and it is in this sense (as Ernest Barker pointed out) that the "commonwealth" of the English people is to this day, officially at least, a Church as well as a State. Surely the Communist notion of "people" is in the same tradition—the Party embracing both Church and State, and "people" being that part of the population which sees itself as members of both?*

BARZINI: As far as the role of the Communist Party as a "Church" is concerned, seeking (as you imply) its "Establishment", we cannot deny that the Party has always succeeded in generating a religious type of loyalty among its members. There is a Party patriotism, which is strong; Communists have done heroic things for the Party with absolute abnegation and self-sacrifice; there are many examples of Communists who have accepted imprisonment and death. The Party has had martyrs whom even their opponents have reason to admire.

The question of the existence of an Italian "people" in the Roman or Augustinian sense is a difficult one. Even under the Roman Empire one could hardly speak of an Italian people. Italy was a mosaic: there was Hispania, Gallia, Greece, there was Africa, and so on: many cities and populations, most of them tribes really, each with its own autonomous rule. Later in their history, the Italians were, for one reason or another, always prevented from considering themselves as a united people. After unification, Italy was, or so we liberals believed, more united than she had been, but even this is now being questioned; according to one contemporary school of history, in 1861 the divisions were merely papered over but remained fundamentally unmended.

Certainly Italians never shared a feeling of being one historic nation—the sentiment which united the English in their heyday, the French both under the Monarchy and after the Revolution, and the Spanish when they conquered South America, has never been known in Italy. The Italians as a people have never shared a like sense of a *mission* to accomplish. Not even the Venetian Republic had it, despite its great strength as a self-confident and rich power. The Venetians believed in their city, in trade, and in keeping the Turks at bay for both religious and commercial reasons. But they had no great poem, no great book to provide them with an "ideology" —there was no Venetian feeling of carrying the white man's burden. For all these reasons I would hesitate to say that an Italian *populus* in St Augustine's sense of the word ever existed.

—My suggestion would be that the Communists are trying to create *a people—not a nation—basically for the same reason that made Stalin create an industrial proletariat where virtually none existed. From this "people" they would then hope to obtain that sense of legitimacy which they cannot hope to obtain from Italy's present heterogeneous population.*

BARZINI: If you are saying that the Communists are trying to create a lasting constituency for themselves nationally, I would agree with you—they have no alternative. But whether they will succeed in doing so is another matter. The Italians are still more sensitive to the appeals of nationalism than to the appeals of the Communist Party. The two can, of course, be combined, as the French Communists are now doing in their attempt to outflank the Gaullists. But the Italian Communists have, so far at least, abstained from using this demagogic and transparent weapon. Every Italian government since unification has tried to fuse the population of Italy into a homogeneous people—without much success. The Communist effort will, if anything, add a rift along class divisions to Italy's existing heterogeneity—unless the Party's liberalism is truly such that it is prepared to rise above class categories and address itself with a gradualist reform programme to the country as a whole. I would have no objection to that because it would mean that the Italian Communist Party has *ceased* to be Communist.

—Have the Christian Democrats anything to contribute to this exercise in "people-building"?

BARZINI: I would hardly think so. The Christian Democrats are a defensive party—a motley assembly of persons, some of them not even very Christian or democratic. They stand for the survival of the traditional values of Italian civilisation, and the only thread uniting them is their opposition to Communism. But they are not a party with any coherent conception of the nation, or the state, or the future of man. They are manning the ramparts, that is all.

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6. Of Ideology & "The Empress's Hat"

EXPOSED AS WE ALL ARE *to a great deal of rhetoric about freedom, I often wonder whether those who are most indignant about the absence of liberty really* want *liberty—or perhaps only a good fight for it? I know students of the Soviet system whose whole life is dedicated to the destruction of the Soviet system, but they would be disappointed if the system collapsed, for what they most desire is not the destruction of Communism but to be in the battle for the destruction of Communism.*

BARZINI: At the risk of repeating myself: the struggle for freedom is successful when it is not a fight for some vague notion of liberty but a battle against a tyrant, a foreign oppressor, or a usurper in the name of liberty. The problem becomes difficult when you have got liberty. The moment on the barricade is an easy one, for the identity of the enemy is clear—all you have to do is defeat him. But when the guns are silent and the dust has settled, you are up against the problem of making sense of your freedom. What is it for? How do you get people interested? The only way to make people conscious of their freedom is to see to it that they lose it. Then they will learn how precious it is and do heroic things to recapture it. I am sometimes almost tempted to think that it might be a good thing if the Italians lost their freedom. It would not take them long to discover what it is like to be without it—a costly lesson, no doubt, but one that may be inescapable.

—So the **struggle** *for freedom—not freedom itself—is the whole message. If true, as I think it is, it does not reflect well on our maturity. The Greek idea that liberty makes it possible for those who care to use it to attain happiness in the sense of self-fulfilment (***eudaimonia***), rather than mere pleasure or the absence of pain, is as distant from the man in the street in London or Naples as it was from the slaves of Athens or the serfs of 18th-century Russia.*

The locus classicus *of liberty asserted in face of an oppressor is this passage in the American Declaration of Independence:*

> **"But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security."**

Hasn't this a highly contemporary ring about it?

BARZINI: Oh, yes. Two hundred years ago, the Americans made out *the* perfect case for the national liberation of Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Bulgaria, East Germany, and the Baltic states. The despotism and usurpations of King George III, against which the Founding Fathers rose in rebellion, were extremely mild in comparison with Soviet rule in these countries. The Americans should make more of their revolutionary past. After all, they had their revolution early and preserved its message in exemplary condition; whereas the Russians came along with their revolution 141 years later, and then exchanged Czarism for Czarism.

—You have said the Italians are past masters at adjusting to the inevitable, and you have mentioned the skilful manoeuvering of journalists and editors who want to be found on the right side of the Communist Party when the chips are down. But wouldn't the same tradition work **against** *the Communist Party too? Isn't "Euro-Communism", as the Russians rightly suspect, Communism's pre-emptive capitulation before Western liberalism and the whole political culture of Western Europe?*

BARZINI: I cannot vouch for the ultimate good faith of every Italian Communist leader. What we can see, however, is that the Party leaders have declared themselves to be anxious to play by the established rules of parliamentary democracy, that they have repudiated their former allegiance to Moscow, and come firmly down on the side of European unification. This may be opportunism, but it is much more likely to be a recognition of the simple fact that the Italian working class and the Italian people as a whole will not tolerate any political force that puts authority before democracy, foreign rule before Italian rule, Moscow before Europe.

—You are, then, pretty sure that a schism with Moscow exists and, whether in good faith or bad, the Italian Communists are set on a road from which there is no return?

BARZINI: I have no way of knowing whether the schism is beyond repair, but there are more ways than one of undermining the monolithic character of religion—and Communism is certainly a secular faith, complete, in its Soviet variant, with all the paraphernalia of a church.

When I lived in China, I met some very old Catholic missionaries who had been there under the Empire. They told me that one day they invited the last Empress, Tz'u-hsi, to attend Mass. The Empress was shocked to observe that the priest said Mass with his head uncovered. According to the Chinese rules of propriety, to appear hatless before God was disrespectful. So she not only ordered that henceforth Catholic priests should say Mass wearing a hat, but she made it her business to design the hat herself—an appalling-looking thing, very much like a large lampshade in gaudy colours. The priests were aghast and sent word to Rome for advice. Word came back: "Wear the Empress's hat!"

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Well, Catholic missionaries in China had already abandoned wearing the soutane for Chinese clothes in dark colours, and they were sporting pigtails. To all this was now added the Empress's hat.

On another occasion it had to be decided whether a Chinese convert to Catholicism should be allowed to go on practising the Confucian rites of ancestor-worship. Rome decided: yes—ancestor worship was a sign of filial love; attachment to the family and tradition were good things which the Church could wholly tolerate.

So, using your analogy, it is at least possible that Moscow has decided that it would be difficult to propagate the faith in Western Europe without allowing the Italian Communists to wear the local Empress's hat. It is also possible that the Western Communists have decided to wear the hat even though Moscow objects.

—Your analogy does not quite reassure me, because your European missionaries changed only their headgear —not their hearts. They remained Catholic missionaries with their heads covered every bit as much as they had been with their heads uncovered. Had they repudiated, for example, the Immaculate Conception, then I would say your analogy is reassuring—but they did not. Have the Italian Communists?

BARZINI: No one knows with certainty. The French Communists have repudiated the "dictatorship of the proletariat"— their (if you like) immaculate conception. In Italian Communist usage the phrase passed into desuetude a long time ago (and might according to Lombardo Radice, be read out of the movement at the Party's next congress together with Marxism-Leninism). But into its place has stepped Gramsci's notion of the "hegemony" of the proletariat.[5] This may mean, as some Communists are anxious to convince us, a benign rule of all people of goodwill, yet it is much more likely to mean the rule of the Communist Party. This in turn means the rule of the Party élite, which in turn means the rule of the Politburo, and finally that of a dozen or so men at the pinnacle of the power-élite.

It is never easy to tell whether the Communists are calling a spade a spade or talking in coded language to hide their meaning. When I was a member of Parliament I had friendly personal relations with the leaders of the Communist Party, including Togliatti. (Most of us were, as was customary among Members, on familiar "*tu*" terms with one another even though we were political opponents.) Shortly after my return from a visit to Russia, Togliatti stopped me in the lobby and asked what sort of impressions I had brought back from the Soviet Union.

"Well", I said, "as you know, I disagree with the whole of Soviet ideology, I believe in another kind of society, a different conception of man and so forth, but I understood everything I saw—nothing was mysterious, except one thing."

"What was that?", Togliatti asked.

"The strange lies they try to make you believe in Moscow."

"What, for example?"

"For example that Beria was an agent of British intelligence" (I had been in Russia shortly after Beria's fall and execution). "I can well believe", I continued, "that British intelligence has some excellent men, but I find it a little hard to believe that they could have reached and recruited Beria. What could they offer him—money, fame, women? He *had* everything he wanted!"

"Oh, well", said Togliatti, "you don't understand"—and here was a fine example of Italian finesse at work—"you don't understand: when the Russians say Beria was an agent of British intelligence, it is a figure of speech—what they mean is that Beria behaved *as if he were a British agent*!"

I would, therefore, leave it to wiser men than myself to tell deception from reality in Communist behaviour. Whether Beria was executed because he was a foreign agent or because he acted as though he had been one—the fact is he is dead. And although my eyes remained dry when I heard of Beria's fall—he was an exceptionally evil man even by Soviet standards—his fate is a warning that we must thoroughly fireproof ourselves before we start playing with the kind of fire which the Communist parties represent.

—We have now examined liberty from a great many points of view, and the only firm conclusion I can draw is that liberty is something most people will fight for once they have lost it. But I would go a step further and, taking my cue from your view that it is always easy to fight a tyrant, I would say that the struggle against foreign invasion and foreign rule is the only form of the quest for freedom which is unfailingly with us. Domestic despotisms have a sorry record of being well tolerated, often for long periods of time. In the current struggle for power this nationalistic conception of freedom has a symmetrical effect on the Soviet bloc and the Western alliance. It makes Moscow's grip on East/Central Europe, the Baltic states and the Ukraine highly vulnerable, while on our side of the fence it has already reduced the business-end of the Atlantic alliance to West Germany and the US. France will defend Europe to the last drop of the blood of the last German soldier, while the weaknesses (indeed the near-collapse) of Italy and Britain have by now rendered them marginal to the problem.

[5] See on Gramsci, Enzo Bettiza, "Great Illusions in the Face of Danger", ENCOUNTER (January) and François Fejtö, "A New Guru of the Paris Intellectuals" (March).

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It is, in 1978, a little unfashionable to quote ancient Greek ideas of public virtue. Yet I find it impossible not to connect Pericles's famous warning in his funeral oration with the funereal conclusions we seem to be heading for in this conversation: "... judging happiness to be the fruit of freedom and freedom of valour, never decline the danger of war." What I find most stirring about this sentence is that it was spoken, not in praise of the conceits of some vainglorious "nation" or intolerant ideology, but of the open, tolerant, wisdom-loving, liberal and democratic civilisation of Athens—a far cry indeed from the fratricidal prescription: "My country, right or wrong."

I am, you will notice, groping for some idea that will rouse us as *Europeans from our national self-centredness, our torpor and myopia.*

BARZINI: I can supply no such idea, but I can give you my personal answer to some of the questions you have raised. I consider myself an Italian and a European. The advance of Soviet divisions across the Elbe would get me just as aroused, alarmed and determined to fight as it would if the Russians were crossing the Po. I regard any threat to Europe as indistinguishable from a direct threat to Italy. For what *is* Europe? The size of a handkerchief. Let us not bemuse ourselves with names: "France", "Italy", "England"—let us, rather, look at the map and weep. Why, Trieste is a mere 140 miles away from Soviet-occupied Hungary; Hamburg a tram-ride (30 miles) from East Germany; and even "remote" England a mere 400 miles from Rostock—the sort of distance one covers over two whiskies in 50 minutes on the shuttle service between Los Angeles and San Francisco. We must get this firmly into our heads: we are, *all* of us—Frenchmen, Britons, Italians, Belgians—sitting on the Elbe! Rome is on the Elbe, Paris is on the Elbe, London is on the Elbe!

If the chips were down, I would fight for two things: Europe and liberty. I am a man of books and learning; I am as much at home with Mozart as with Shakespeare or Racine; I am a citizen of Europe to the East as well as to the West of the Rhine. For me, a Beethoven quartet, the taste of wine in Italy, French cooking, the humane culture of England, the learning of Tübingen, Oxford and Bologna, the historical memories of Karlsbad, Weimar, Venice, Baden-Baden and Vienna *are* Europe. I am saying this without bombast or rhetoric—for these things I would fight and be ready to die.

But how many people share this conception of Europe? Sometimes when I analyse my love for my people, the Italians, I discover that I only love those Italians who have read Dante—a small minority—and I suspect that, in order to generate a shared loyalty to Europe in the broad masses of the people, perhaps we ought to lower our sights from Chaucer, Goethe, Corneille, and Mozart, and bring the idea of Europe down to the level of television entertainment and the comics. But whether this can be done, and how it can be done, is another matter.

—When you say "those Italians who have read Dante" you have presumably something broader in mind—people who have taken the measure of the human condition?

BARZINI: Yes. "Those who have read Dante" is a figure of speech. I am thinking of people who have attained maturity through adversity, toleration despite the excesses and defects of human nature—of men and women who have learned and wrestled with the joys and predicaments, the hopes and frustrations, the visions and abominations of the human adventure. This is no small order, for only strong men can take a candid look at the condition of man and survive the experience. To have reached that degree of spiritual balance and maturity *is* to be truly free.

A minority commitment? Perhaps so, but I do not think I am one of a dying species. There *are* people left among us who are ready to defend their patrimony on this minute promontory of the Euro-Asian landmass.

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L. P. Wilkinson

From the Point of View of Antiquity

Classical Approaches

II. Women's Liberation

"How can I keep up my zeal for the cause?" a suffragette asked Mrs Pankhurst. "Trust in God", came the reply, "She will help you." The fact that this can pass as a joke with us shows how deeply we are impregnated with patriarchal assumptions. Milton put this attitude in a nutshell:

He for God only, she for God in him.

The modern movement for women's liberation began in the climate that produced the French Revolution and Tom Paine's *Rights of Man*. Its standard-bearer, at any rate for English-speaking people, was Mary Wollstonecroft, whose *Vindication of the Rights of Women* appeared in the revolutionary year of 1792. Claire Tomalin has summed up her views as follows:

> "Women are human beings before they are sexual beings; mind has no sex; society is wasting its assets if it retains women in the role of convenient domestic slaves and 'alluring mistresses', denies them economic independence, and encourages them to be attentive to their looks to the exclusion of all else."

But she also held a view not unknown in antiquity, that sexuality was wrong in itself, redeemed only by parenthood, and largely imposed on women by men. She spoke disapprovingly of husbands who "seduce" their wives, and expressed the view that it is better for marriage to exclude passionate love.

That other year of revolution, 1848, saw the inauguration in America of an organised "Woman's Movement", sparked off by the agitation for the abolition of slavery. A coherent philosophy was provided by John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women* of 1869. Three years earlier the first petition for women's suffrage had been presented to our British Parliament. More than fifty years were to pass before it was granted; and when it was, that was allegedly due less to the pre-War agitation and violence of the suffragettes than to the fact that women, having had to be employed in Wartime to undertake work normally done by men, had proved their capacity. But perhaps this explanation was just a male face-saver.

It was, however, only a fractional victory. Indeed the period 1930 to 1960 was in some respects reactionary. It is only within the past few years that women and their supporters have returned to the charge, storming such citadels as the more adventurous colleges of Cambridge, and later of Oxford; the Queen's Bench; the Stock Exchange; and the leadership of the Conservative Party. And books such as Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* (1969) in America and Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* (1970) in Britain have preached the far more fundamental revolution heralded by Friedrich Engels—not only equality of rights, opportunity and pay between the sexes, but the abandonment of the patriarchal family as the social unit together with the image of the wife as passive partner and ministering angel. 1975, nominated as "Women's Year", has at least seen the passing of the Sex Discrimination Act; but to this type of feminist that has seemed merely inadequate reformism.

Anything so extreme as this is rarely to be found in the Greek and Roman worlds of antiquity. Indeed the overall impression is of a man's world in which women were relegated to a life of seclusion. Not but what the Greeks were aware that just outside the Hellenic periphery there were peoples among whom the social roles of men and women were reversed or where women were dominant; in Egypt, for instance (though this was in fact no longer so when

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Herodotus and Sophocles were writing), and in parts of Asia Minor.[1]

What approaches were there in the classical world, either in theory or practice, in the sphere of law, politics, society or the inner life of the individual, to "women's liberation"?

Three things we must bear in mind all the time. Firstly, that Athens, through the survival of her massive dramatic, historical and oratorical literature, is the only Greek state of which we have really detailed knowledge, though we have interesting information about Sparta, and much detail from papyri, supplemented by literature, about the Hellenised part of Ptolemaic Egypt. Secondly, that the literature was produced almost entirely by men. And thirdly, that we know very little about the poor, whose struggle for existence tends to produce a life-style of ubiquitous similarity. As Aristotle said, the poor man, having no slaves, was obliged to use his wife and children as servants, and no magistrate could prevent the wives of the poor from going around out of doors. They could at least gossip at the well.

In Homer women are not secluded. Helen can walk on the walls of Troy; the princess Nausicaä can take her washing down to the beach with her companions; young men and girls can have loving talk together (as Hector recalls when he turns finally to face Achilles). The marriage state is idealised, but it is one in which the provinces of the partners are already clearly divided (as Hector gently reminds Andromache when she tries to advise him on tactics in fighting). Wives have no place even at the dining-table, only in the household, at the loom, and in the marriage-bed. A woman's beauty and accomplishments are a status-symbol won by her husband, though she in turn receives reflected glory from his prestige. Arete, Queen of Phaeacia, may seem an exception, and indeed she was one that proved the rule; for Athena herself says that King Alcinoüs honours her as no other woman in the world is honoured. But hers is a personal influence, exercised through him, on whom, it is expressly said, "all the power and might of the Phaeacians depend."

Penelope's case is peculiar. Her husband is missing, but not known to be dead. There is confusion as to whether, if once he is presumed dead, it is for her father Icarius or for her son Telemachus (once he comes of age) to decide who next may marry her. But what is clear is that even a Queen has a male in the position of guardian (*kyrios*), whether husband, father, or son. We also find in Homer a double standard of sexual morality. A male may go to bed with females other than his wife, either simply for pleasure or to get himself a male heir (as Menelaus did by amicable arrangement with Helen, who had not provided him with one); but a wife was expected to remain faithful, even if in this age the burden of opprobrium fell more heavily on an adulterer than an adulteress, on Paris than Helen. And even the gods, as Calypso complains, are jealous if a goddess takes a mortal as bedfellow, sometimes to the extent of killing him. Calypso's complaint is the first protest in the struggle for equal rights for women (even if it is not enough to justify Samuel Butler's belief that the *Odyssey* was composed by a woman).

When Greece re-emerged from its Dark Age there survived from Homeric times these three features: the guardian without whom no woman could perform any legal act; the restriction of wives' chief occupations to working wool, spinning and weaving, and the supervision of the household slaves; and the double standard of sexual morality. At the same time we find in Hesiod's myth of Pandora and her jar full of evils the beginning of an un-Homeric tradition in literature of male vituperation or mockery of women in which genuine misogyny merged into rhetorical and satirical virtuosity,[2] culminating in the 660 vitriolic lines of Juvenal's Sixth Satire. The reflection that wives are a regrettable necessity, useful only for producing legitimate offspring, occurs to men ranging from Euripides' Jason and Hippolytus to the Roman censor Metellus Macedonicus.

In Sappho's Lesbos and other Aegean isles, in some Dorian and aristocratic states in the so-called archaic period round about 600 B.C., and among the Greeks of Sicily and South Italy, we glimpse a life in which women were socially free, as in Homer. But the general pattern seems to have become that of the democratic city-state of which Athens is the supreme example. (I say "seems" because for the classical period we know

[1] According to Herodotus Lydian girls, having earned the amount of a dowry by prostitution, gave their hand in marriage to whomever they wished. The Lycians honoured women more than men, took their names from their mothers, and passed their inheritance to daughters, not sons. If a Lycian woman married a foreigner or slave, their children were free citizens.

[2] *E.g.* "There are only two happy days in a husband's life, his wedding-day and his wife's funeral." (Falsely attributed to Hipponax.)

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too little about states other than Athens.)

The former comparative freedom of aristocratic ladies was suppressed. Of course women had no political role: it was more than a nine-days'-wonder when a woman of the pan-Hellenic colony of Thurii in South Italy succeeded in addressing the Assembly. The whole point of the first half of Aristophanes' play *Ecclesiazusae* (*The Women's Assembly*) was that the idea was utterly paradoxical, a *reductio ad absurdum*: men had made such a mess of things that women could hardly do worse—though even an Athenian male chauvinist must have felt a grudging admiration for their organiser, Praxagora, still more for Lysistrata (who in the war-time play of that name tries to get the wives of Athens and Sparta to blackmail their husbands into making peace by denying them their sexual expectations). Women could in reality play a part behind the scenes. A wife of strong personality could influence a sensible or a weaker husband. It is a striking fact that one reason for which an Athenian could be held incompetent at law—along with constraint, senility, disease, and the influence of drugs—was being under the persuasion of a woman.

IN ATHENIAN LAW a woman's male guardian, whether father, husband, father's legitimate or testamentary heir (in that order) or failing these a public official, the *archon*, could dispose of her in marriage or adoption, and even in theory sell her into slavery if she was caught being seduced. Normally a girl passed from the guardianship of her father, who fixed up a marriage for her when she was fourteen, into that of her husband; but her father, or failing him her agnate next-of-kin, retained the right to get the *archon* to dissolve the marriage. Her dowry was all-important; but it did not belong to her, for a woman could own no property. It remained part of the estate of her father's family; and at the wedding her husband had to sign an inventory. Thenceforward he had the usufruct, and this passed to their children.

But he did not have things all his own way. Divorce was easy, and whatever the cause, the dowry reverted. The wife thus had some security as against lack of freedom: her husband could not afford to maltreat her intolerably. He was also bound by law to support her, as were her children after his death. If she was left a widow, she reverted to the guardianship of her father or agnate next-of-kin, and anyone could prosecute a guardian who failed to do his legal duty. But many widows were young enough to remarry. Thus every woman in Athens who wanted it had a man's roof to live under. The state also tried to ensure that as many of its woman citizens as possible had a husband. This would be an effect, if it was not a primary motive, of Pericles' law of 451 B.C. by which children of citizens married to alien wives were not to be citizens. It provided dowries for girls who could not afford one but were attractive enough to find suitors.

ADULTERY involving a citizen's wife was treated as a very serious crime, and not merely because it outraged male *amour propre*. It was considered essential that the paternity of children should not be in doubt, not only because of the husband's feelings towards them, but because a main reason for the care taken to ensure the perpetuation of citizen families was the maintenance by each of the religious cult of its ancestors, and there must be no interloper. If an *archon* failed in his duty of seeing that a family had a male heir, it was for impiety that he was prosecuted. On the other hand, intercourse by husbands with non-citizens had no such serious result; and it was tolerated provided the wife, the security for the dowry, was not made (as she was in the case of Alcibiades) to take second place. Nor was there anything to prevent a man from enjoying a slave in his own household. It is significant that one feature of the women's paradise proclaimed by Aristophanes' Praxagora is that slave-girls will not compete with free wives in matters of love.

SUCH A STATE OF AFFAIRS is worlds away from that advocated by our feminists; but it must be seen in the context of the democratic city-state.

The city was what gave meaning to its citizens' lives. The inclinations of individuals had to be sacrificed for the common feeling of well-being. The city was an aggregate of families, not individuals. These laws were directed to the preservation of families through the provision of legitimate male heirs. The disregard of the mother's family, however misguided it may seem, was not irrational male chauvinism. The common belief was that genetic inheritance resided in the male seed, the female providing little more than a passive matrix, as Apollo affirms in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*; and indeed the function of the ovum in mammalian genetics was not understood until

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the 19th century. A family could therefore be truly perpetuated only in the male line.

As to social life for female citizens, everything was motivated by fear of adultery. Women of the classes above the poverty line lived in a secluded part of the dull house behind locked doors. Any tendency to personal display was stifled by Solon's sumptuary laws. They were not present when anyone other than relatives came to a meal, nor did they go out to meals or parties with their husbands; in fact they rarely went out at all, apart from a walk with a female slave in attendance, except to a family reunion or a religious festival. They plied household tasks in the company of female slaves. Men on the other hand were out all day, in the Assembly, or law-court or gymnasium, working or doing the household shopping, or conversing in some colonnade or at a party. Women were generally regarded as a different kind of human being, complementary to men. One has only to recall the single sentence addressed to them at the end of Pericles' funeral oration in Thucydides:

> "Great will be your glory if you are found not inferior to your nature; and the greatest of all is hers who is least spoken of by men, whether for praise or blame."

Xenophon's Ischomachus, an idealised Athenian country gentleman, married a girl of fifteen properly brought up to speak, hear, and see as little as possible. Her role was to supervise the household and to obey her father and her husband who regarded himself as a sort of bird-tamer.

Aristotle, at the end of the classical period, though he deprecates the way that some barbarians treat their wives as slaves, is yet convinced that women are intellectually, physically and morally inferior to men, and that it is natural for men to rule and women to obey. No wonder that women took to drink, as the comedians liked to allege.

WHETHER THEY ATTENDED the theatrical performances or not is disputed. It seems most probable that they did, and that would be not out of keeping, since these were originally religious festivals, in honour of Dionysus.

And the mention of the theatre recalls doubts that have been raised about the orthodox conception of their life. In three of Aristophanes' plays they are represented as knowing quite a lot about politics (*Lysistrata*), quite a lot about the latest social theories (*Ecclesiazusae*), and quite a lot about Euripides (*Thesmophoriazusae*). That could, of course, be part of the humorous paradox, but it seems more significant; and we know from casual evidence, from law-suits for instance, that husbands did discuss public affairs with their wives. Again, the tragedies are full of female characters who are far from cloistered, though often, especially in Euripides, they apologise for their unfeminine boldness and show respect for the conventional limitations of the poet's day. Some (such as Clytemnestra, Medea, and Antigone) are represented as having the spirit of a man; the daring Electra is contrasted with her normal sister Chrysothemis; and Antigone at least could scarcely fail to excite a measure of sympathy and admiration. Admittedly the audience would be conscious that these were Queens and Princesses inhabiting a distant world, as a Russian audience of today must feel when viewing a 19th-century opera. Yet such plays, especially those of Euripides, must have given an audience as intelligent as the Athenians food for thought about its preconceptions, and contributed to the so-called Sophistic Enlightenment of the late 5th century.

HUMAN BEINGS are apt to behave in practice more humanely than their theories and institutions would suggest. The Attic vase-paintings of 470–430 are full of interest in family life. The funeral vases, like the funeral monuments, depict in a most moving way farewells between husband and wife. It is a commonplace that arranged marriages may lead to mutual affection, perhaps no less often than marriages originating in romantic passion. In any case it would be wrong to assume that the average Athenian looked down on his wife. Even Xenophon's Ischomachus treats his at least as a partner in running the estate and bringing up the children; and even Aristotle dearly loved his wife Pytheas. An Attic orator of the 4th century remarked glibly before a jury,

> "We resort to courtesans for our pleasures, keep concubines to minister to our daily comforts, and marry wives to give us legitimate children and be faithful guardians of our domestic hearths."

But the demarcation lines were not as clear as that. Sophocles' *Trachiniae* is about a wife's attempt to win back her husband's love from a new concubine. Xenophon, at the end of his *Symposium*, has the guests, mildly excited by a boy and girl cabaret whose climax was a kiss, jump on their horses and gallop home to their

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wives. And the mainspring of the *Lysistrata* is that the men suffer terrible deprivation from the sexual strike of their wives: it is only in ultimate desperation that they talk of resorting to prostitutes, though state brothels had long since been instituted by Solon.

BUT IF WE ARE THINKING of women's liberation as it is conceived of today, it must be something more than security with a good chance of affection within a confining patriarchal system in which citizenship was the paramount value. What about the concubines and courtesans of that orator's dictum?

A concubine could be a lower-class Athenian, an immigrant, or a slave. The Greeks were monogamous, and no doubt a wife was enough for most citizens. But a man might like to keep a concubine also, if he could square or dupe his wife and children. Sometimes however this broke up the marriage. Alcibiades' wife sought to leave him because he brought his mistresses home. Pericles, on the other hand, married off his wife to someone else, leaving himself free to take on later as concubine the Milesian courtesan Aspasia. More often, perhaps, it would be a case of a widower consoling himself with a favourite slave, whom he would set free. Or a courtesan might be glad to retire into the greater security of concubinage. Aristotle, after his wife's death, had an intimate relationship with the courtesan Herpyllis, mother of Nicomachus, for the rest of his life, and provided for her in his will. The line between wife and concubine at Athens was very thin; and whereas the superior status of the wife must be kept clear, the concubine might have more freedom. Also, instead of providing a dowry (and this was the crux of the matter), she was provided for. Nevertheless to keep a concubine when you had a wife seems to have been considered an un-Greek trait, not really respectable.

A woman might become a concubine either because she was a slave and had to, or to better herself, or for love. Timandra, the mistress of Alcibiades, stuck to him when he was outlawed and gave him the best burial she could afford. She was the mother of the famous courtesan Laïs, who set all Greece on fire and was the favourite model of Apelles. I have used the old-fashioned word "courtesan" to represent the Greek *hetaera* (companion), a woman who, although she sold her sexual favours, studied to educate herself so that her arts and conversation might also make her agreeable to men. Socrates in Xenophon expresses surprise at finding the house of the *hetaera* Theodota so elegant. So far from being forbidden to attend men's parties, such women were often the chief attraction of them, and they were mainly sought by young, unmarried men. It is these *demi-mondaines*, often adventuresses from abroad, who come nearest to being liberated women in the modern sense.

And yet—not everyone would enjoy the life even of the famous Thaïs, in Menander's words "loving no one but always pretending", not to mention progressively lowering one's sights as the years went by, charging less, and accepting older men. *Hetaerae* are represented by the orators as pleasant but scandalous parasites. They were not protected by the law; and it was hard for them to save up for a dreaded old age when land, the safest investment, could not be held by women. The best hope was to be taken on as concubine of a man of substance, which incidentally secured exemption from the tax on prostitution. But that might still leave you stranded if he got tired of you or died. The opposite of wives, these women had a sort of freedom in place of security. The 4th century was the great age of the "*grandes cocottes*", glorified in the so-called Middle Comedy.

LET ME TURN NOW for a moment from Athens to Sparta. There the picture is very different.

An aristocratic tradition was maintained by the narrow oligarchy of "Spartiate" peers who were above all a military caste. They had to be that if they were to keep in subjection the Helots and

SLAVE PREPARING A BATH.
Onesimos, c. 409 B.C.

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Messenians on whose labour they depended. So they became for Athenian aristocrats the ideal of a state which had *eunomia*, law and order, without the besetting curse of most Greek cities, class warfare. There is admittedly an element of myth in the conception of her institutions, attributed to the old lawgiver Lycurgus and later enshrined in Plutarch's Life of him, and some of the stories it generated may only have been *ben trovato*. But Plato and Xenophon knew Sparta at the height of her success, in the first thirty years of the 4th century, after her victory in the Peloponnesian War; and they can hardly have misrepresented her institutions in essentials.

As to women, the emphasis was on producing sturdy spear-fodder. To a foreigner who remarked that only Spartan women ruled their men Leonidas' wife is said to have replied, "We alone produce men." According to Plutarch, no Spartan woman had her name inscribed on a tombstone unless she died in childbirth. Far from being cloistered to protect their chastity, girls did gymnastic training with boys, to the scandal of other Greeks. They danced in each other's presence naked, or perhaps lightly clad, allegedly to promote desire for marriage. This is the more surprising as a reason—since girls were not married, as they were elsewhere, when physically still immature. For eugenic purposes both bride and groom had to be in the prime of life.

We are told about an institution of trial marriage, for which there are at any rate parallels. For some time a couple, secretly engaged, would meet and have intercourse clandestinely, the youth returning for the night to his barracks. If the girl conceived, they would get married; if not, it was quietly broken off and no one was any the wiser. Such was the desire to produce numerous enough and sturdy enough pure-bred Spartiates that, as we saw, wife-sharing was quite in order,[3] concubinage being practically unknown and prostitution rare. Men did not set up house till they were about thirty, and home life meant little. Their children were looked after by slaves; boys were taken away from home at seven and initiated into mess life, being regarded as children of the state; and even the spinning and weaving were not done by wives, again in striking contrast to other Greek communities, but by servants.

Spartiate women were consequently a leisured class, save that they had more responsible duties undertaken elsewhere by men. Their husbands were so often and so long absent on campaign, and when at home so occupied with military training and security duties, that they did not themselves farm estates. A good deal of management had to be entrusted to their wives. Women were here submitted to no guardian. They were nearer in age to their husbands than in Athens, for instance. They owned and drove horses. More important, they could own land; and by Aristotle's time more than two fifths of the Spartan homeland, Laconia, was in their hands. Heiresses made acquisitive marriages, their correspondingly heavy dowries impoverishing the rest of their family. Spartiate women emerged more powerful than ever from the long Peloponnesian War.

Aristotle noted the paradox that in war-like peoples the women tend to rule the men. So it was in Sparta (even though the Kings and magistrates were males). Wives were addressed as "mistress." These women came near in some ways to the liberated women of modern times. But they had too little to do. Conditioned like *Hitlermädchen* to breed soldiers for a repressive police-state, they were (as Plato observed) inadequately equipped for leisure. When Sparta, in relief and elation at her victory, relaxed her traditional discipline, she found too late that it was impossible psychologically to reimpose it. This applied specially to the women, who proved a liability in the crisis of Sparta's undoing at the Battle of Leuctra in 371.

BUT IN THE REST OF GREECE ALSO preconceptions about women, as about everything else, began to loosen up in the so-called Sophistic Enlightenment of the late 5th century, even if in the short run the reactionaries prevailed against such advanced spirits as Socrates and Euripides. This movement was probably accelerated by the fact that prolonged absence of men on campaign had the same effect on women's importance as at Sparta; also that the death of so many men in war made women preponderate in numbers. But even earlier, in the second quarter of the 5th century, vase paintings show a marked increase of interest in women. Euripides went so far as to make one of his characters say that while there was nothing worse than a bad woman, there was nothing better than a good one; and he exemplified a good one as a wife in his *Alcestis*.

It seems to have been Socrates who propounded the novel thesis, taken up by many

[3] Timaea, wife of King Agis of Sparta, was proud to have a son by Alcibiades.

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after him, that good (*arete*) is the same in woman as in man. The character of Aspasia, admired in the Socratic circle, may have brought this home to open-minded thinkers. A pupil of Socrates called Aeschines of Sphettos composed, about the year 386, a dialogue entitled *Aspasia*, fragments of which (if they are genuine) show that he made some character maintain that love (*eros*) between husband and wife was the means of getting the best out of both; and that the impulse to improve one another was the essence of love, not only in the discipleship of male to male, but in the marriage relationship. Here, at last, is some approach to equality of the sexes.

A COROLLARY WAS that girls ought to have the same education as boys. Plato in his *Republic* started from the premise that, childbirth apart, women differ in capacity from men only as one man differs from another, or one woman from another. It followed that women should not be confined to household chores, but should be eligible for his military élite of guardians. The only difference between a woman and a man selected would be that the woman, as being physically weaker, would be allotted lighter duties. In fact, Plato insists, this was natural, whereas the existing system of having different roles for the two sexes was unnatural. There would be no monogamous marriages, only periodic temporary couplings; and the children would be brought up as belonging to the community, unrecognisable by their natural parents. In the *Laws* he says that if one half of the state only is happy, the legislator has failed.

Plato was, however, no liberal as regards women. The only appearance of a woman in his dialogues (apart from the reported homily of Diotima in the *Symposium*) is that of poor Xanthippe, Socrates' wife, who is hustled away at the beginning of the *Phaedo* so that he may spend his last hours in talking calmly to his male friends, undisturbed by her womanish weeping. The dialogues, especially the *Timaeus*, contain many contemptuous implications and asides about women. Plato seems to have been that rarity in the Greek world, a bachelor, perhaps because he was a real homosexual (not a temporary one or part-time, as others were).

Nevertheless, in the *Laws* this bachelor reinstates marriage and makes it compulsory. Girls and women are to emerge (reluctant, it is assumed) out of their seclusion, and be submitted to mess life, separate from that of men and under a mistress, and given military training so that they may act as auxiliary soldiers in a crisis instead of crowding into the temples. Equality here hardly meant liberation. The logicality of giving women as well as men social responsibilities and duties is reaffirmed. But when it comes to finding suitable offices for them to fill, the only one we hear of is a new one, that of inspectress of marriages, open to those aged over forty. These inspectresses are to have daily meetings to report to each other any cases of married couples in the 10-year period prescribed for procreation where either partner seems to be paying attention to things other than the eugenic reproductive duty solemnly enjoined at marriage; and if they fail by admonition or threats to get the offender to mend his or her ways, they are to inform the State Council with a view to severe sanctions. So marriage, instead of being regulated by private males, is to be regulated by the state through officious females. For the rest, women are apparently to be under male guardianship, as at Athens; and by abolishing the dowry, as setting up a relationship alloyed with money, Plato risked subjecting the wife still more to her husband if they failed to establish an altruistic relationship based on affection.

ARISTOTLE was almost wholly reactionary as regards women. But there was one sect which was as radical as Plato had been, the Cynics. Diogenes, their founder, whose life spanned most of the 4th century, thought that marriage, like all social conventions, was contrary to nature and therefore bad. The truly free life involved jettisoning all conventions. For him community of women was not a feature contributing to a utopian state, but a symptom of sexual freedom, and community of children only an inevitable corollary. From his forerunner, the Socratic Antisthenes, he inherited the principle that good is the same in man and woman.

DIOGENES is said to have been a misogynist, but at least he approved of no cohabitation save that of the man who persuades and the woman who is persuaded. His pupil Crates married. Four centuries later, when the Stoic philosopher Epictetus was explaining that a Cynic philosopher could not have a wife because his whole life was dedicated to being a mendicant preacher, someone interposed: "What about Crates?"

Epictetus replied that that was a quite ex-

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ceptional case of passionate love, which could hardly recur. Hipparchia, the woman in question, was the first female "drop-out" from a wealthy family—though I hesitate to claim that the word "hippy" is derived from her name. She conceived a passion for Crates, his teaching and his way of life. She donned the coarse cloak of his sect; and if she had a "bra," no doubt she burned it. She went out to meals with him, something only courtesans normally did with men. Though the Cynics believed in free sexual intercourse by mutual consent, specimens of the innumerable stories about this couple, their public love-making and so on, are preserved only in Apuleius, and may simply be inventions to highlight the Cynic image. There is, however, better evidence for the story that they lent out their daughter for trial periods of 30 days. Hipparchia is the best ancient analogy to one kind of modern liberated woman.

ZENO, the founder of Stoicism, thought that community of women was a natural dispensation which had come to be forgotten. True to his principle that one should live according to nature, he advocated its revival in his lost utopia *The Republic,* but only (as in Plato's) for an élite; for the rest it would be an impracticable ideal. Zeno was reputed to be homosexual. At any rate no woman was admitted to the Stoa; and Stoicism, destined to be the dominant philosophy of the Graeco-Roman world, confirmed marriage and motherhood as the role of women. But, in Epicurus' garden, women (including the *hetaera* Leontion whom he favoured) were welcomed and treated on a par with men. There was no objection to sexual intercourse there, provided the disturbing passion of love was not involved. Indeed it was as students of philosophy that women most easily attained equality with men, and freedom. What these philosophers, Cynic, Stoic and Epicurean, had in common was their concern with the salvation or contentment of the individual soul. Individualism was the hallmark of the age.

BUT PHILOSOPHY WAS NOT the basic cause of such liberalisation of the life of women as occurred in the Hellenistic Age. No real change could have come until the built-in element of totalitarianism in the city-state was weakened, and that was brought about by the conquests of Alexander.

Inter-city marriages came in, first in the federal leagues; then in Asia Minor and the islands; and finally even at Athens. Women poets and musicians travelled about, accompanied by their guardians. Girls now received primary and secondary education, and athletic training, just like boys, in some places along with them. The first woman physician we know of practised at Athens in the late 4th century. One at Pergamum practised in partnership with her husband. One in Lycia had her statue erected by the local council. There were also priestesses of the multiplying cults, who even if married had in this respect a sector of independent life and influence. Decrees were passed recording the services and benefactions of women, which Pericles would have thought most improper. In general it would seem that *de facto* women became less dependent on their guardians and more able to acquire wealth. But Athens remained more conservative than other Hellenised regions such as Egypt and Asia Minor.

The chief change, however, was in the conception of the married state itself. Though the institution of guardianship for women persisted everywhere, behind the façade they obtained more power to hold and use property. This is a symptom of a new idea of partnership. Marriage by consent, for love, also became commoner. In the Athenian New Comedy introduced by Menander towards the end of the 4th century conjugal love is a main theme; and this love is more than affection. There is here a recognition of the moral equality of the partners that shows that, in the long run, the ideas of Socrates and Euripides have sunk in. Again, the young poetess Erinna says that when her friend Baucis married, Aphrodite put in her heart forgetfulness of the childish things they had shared—Aphrodite, the goddess of sexual love, not Hera, the official goddess of marriage. The idea of marriage as a communion of love transcending the separate interests of the partners is emerging.

IT WAS THIS Hellenistic World, in which people were seeking less how to promote the common good of their city-state than how to be happy (or, at least, not unhappy) as individuals, that captured its conquerors, the Romans, in the 2nd century B.C.

In theory, at least, Rome still retained the institutions of a city-state. Wives were for breeding citizens. But although women had

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themselves no political rights or functions, even legend of early times told of their personal influence (of Coriolanus, for instance, sparing Rome at the entreaty of his wife and daughter). In the historical age Cornelia moulded her sons the Gracchi; Marius' wife accompanied him on his campaign against the Teutons; Metella influenced her husband Sulla; Lucullus had to sue through Cethegus' mistress Praecia for the command against Mithridates. Through dynastic marriages women were the cement of political parties. Their influence owed something to the precedent of the Hellenistic Queens. The death of so many men in the civil wars increased their power. Sallust alleged that a leading spirit among the Catilinarian conspirators was the cultivated, accomplished, witty Sempronia. We catch a direct glimpse in a letter Cicero wrote to Atticus three months after the assassination of Caesar:

> "I got to Antium on the 8th. Brutus was delighted to see me. Then, in front of Servilia, Tertia and Portia he asked me my opinion of the situation." (These were Brutus' mother, half-sister, and wife.)

Servilia in particular, who had once been Caesar's mistress, takes part in the subsequent discussion, even undertaking to get a clause deleted from a Senatorial bill. Four years later we find Antony's wife Fulvia raising legions and actually commanding them in the field. Livia's influence with Augustus was more discreet, but all the weightier because his power was absolute; and it was notorious that Claudius was dominated by his wives Messalina and Agrippina. But though imperial women could receive the highest honours, including posthumous deification, no one ever suggested that there should be an Empress Regnant of Rome.

Legally, however, all Roman women had a guardian, called *tutor,* like the Greek *kyrios*; Cicero said it was because of their weakness in judgment. This was the male head of the family, the *paterfamilias,* who, under the form of marriage that became usual, was not superseded by the husband when she married. He could not only decide whom she should marry, but could subsequently dissolve the marriage. (A signal instance occurred when, for dynastic reasons, Augustus compelled his stepson Tiberius to divorce a much-loved wife and marry his own recently widowed daughter Julia.) In Rome also the double standard of sexual morality was traditional. A wife had to remain faithful under threat of dire penalties, whereas a husband could with impunity indulge himself elsewhere provided he abstained from the wives and daughters of citizens. When the killing of many intestate men and their sons in the Hannibalic Wars had resulted in the enrichment of daughters, the receipt of legacies by women of the richest ratings was forbidden by a law of 169 B.C. All this may seem intolerable. But in practice the restrictions melted with time. The longer a wife was away from the parental roof, and the oftener and further her husband was away on campaign, the more independent she became. The Spartan experience was repeated. Legal fictions were evolved by which, if her *paterfamilias* died, she could substitute for whoever was left as her guardian someone of her own choosing. The Augustan "three-children rights" included exemption from having a guardian. And as for the penalties for adultery, they do not seem to have worried women like Clodia (the villainess of Cicero's speech *Pro Caelio*) who was in all probability the promiscuous Lesbia of Catullus.

ALREADY AT THE BEGINNING OF the 2nd century women had won a significant social victory.

In the first crisis of the Hannibalic War the men had passed a law forbidding them to own more than half-an-ounce of gold, to wear multi-coloured dresses, or to ride in a two-horsed vehicle in the city. Six years after the war was over they demonstrated *en masse* for its repeal, lobbied magistrates on their way to the Forum, blockaded two tribunes in their houses, and succeeded despite bitter opposition from Cato, who is said to have complained,

> "All peoples rule their wives; we rule all peoples; *our* wives rule us."

The Romans were conscious indeed that their women had more social freedom than those of the Greeks. Being generally richer, they could leave more household duties to slaves. A girl received primary education with the boys, and was often taught singing and dancing of a reputable kind. She might receive higher education from her mother or some gifted slave; and bluestockings were not uncommon. Cultural accomplishments were considered an enhancement. As a wife, as soon as she crossed her husband's threshold, usually at the age of 12–15 if it was her first marriage, she was addressed by all the household as *domina.* She lived, not in secluded quarters, but in the hall, where she received callers. She

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helped to issue invitations, and dined with her husband, at home or elsewhere, whoever was present. If she went out, she either walked with an attendant or was carried in a litter. In either case men made way for her, even the consul and his lictors. She gave her mouth to kiss to relations as far removed as second cousins. Only the cynical would agree with Cato that this was a breath-alyser test designed by men to deter her from drinking.[4]

THE SIX VESTAL VIRGINS were in a peculiar position. They could not marry during the 30 years of their religious dedication, and the penalty for unchastity was burial alive, an effective deterrent to candidature. On the other hand, they were freed from guardianship and other legal restrictions applied to women. They also had privileges denied to all but men of high status—the right to drive through Rome in a gig, to be preceded by a lictor, and to sit in the best seats in the theatre.

We have one unique relic that brings us directly into touch with a girl born and reared in the highest society at the time of the transition from Republic to Principate, the half-dozen short poems (only forty lines in all) of Sulpicia, granddaughter of Cicero's friend, the great jurist Servius Sulpicius. With reckless freedom she speaks out about her love for a young man she calls Cerinthus. Her impulsive use of language can obscure her meaning, but here is a bare rendering of the poem that marks the apex of the affair:

> "At last has come such a love, that I should be no less ashamed to cloak it than to lay it bare to another: the goddess of Cythera, yielding to my Muses, has brought him and laid him in my arms. Venus has fulfilled her promise: anyone who has had no joys of her own may tell of mine. I have no wish to seal up what I write for fear someone should read it sooner than my loved one. No, I glory in my offence, and am sick of tempering my face to reputation. Let it be said that we were a pair worthy of each other."

It would seem that women citizens in the late Roman Republic had a less inhibited life than any such class until quite modern times. I say "the late Republic" because soon after that the conviction that liberty had become licence led Augustus to introduce legislation regulating sexual and matrimonial matters. While this still did nothing to penalise a husband who was unfaithful provided it was not with the daughter or wife of a Roman citizen, or with a male citizen, it transferred adultery from the family tribunal, where partiality might result in leniency, to a new public tribunal, where the standard penalty for the woman was banishment to an island with the loss of half her dowry and a third of her other property. There was bitter opposition to this legislation, and at least until Vespasian's time it was not very effective. But things were never quite the same again.

Some high-born women escaped by registering as prostitutes, but Tiberius put a stop to that. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that the whole community followed the behaviour of high society. Numerous inscriptions, corresponding to those funeral monuments in Athens such as the famous "Praise of Turia", make it clear that a high conception of marriage continued to gain ground in the Greco-Roman world. There were signal instances of wifely devotion in the perils of the civil wars.

PLUTARCH touches essentials when he says that physical union with a wife initiates a love that resembles communion in the Great Mysteries; for sexual mutuality in marriage is something that deeply concerns women's liberation. We saw the demarcation made by that Athenian orator, relegating marital intercourse to the sole purpose of breeding.

The ancients, unlike many moderns, were fully conscious of women's sexuality. Indeed, they thought it was keener than that of men. There was a legend of Zeus and Hera in relaxed mood, arguing as to which had most pleasure in sexual intercourse, male or female. Tiresias was summoned, as being the only possible adjudicator, having been both in his day. His verdict was: women, nine times as much. Aristotle did not want girls to marry too young partly because they would be too demanding sexually. Wives were expected to moderate their demands. This idea was deeply rooted at Rome also: intercourse in marriage was not for pleasure. Seneca (anticipating Mary Wollstonecroft) says,

> "Nothing is more disgusting than to love one's wife as though she were a mistress. . . ."

[4] It is true however that the Romans were concerned about this. Excessive drinking by a wife could be grounds for divorce; and in repaying the dowry of a wife he was divorcing a husband could make a deduction on the score of her having drunk "more than health required." It has been suggested that the worry was, not that wine might inflame lust and so lead to adultery, but that it was believed to have contraceptive and abortifacient properties.

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And Lucretius, in a well-known passage, anticipates the Victorian principle that "Ladies don't move."

THE SEXUAL DEPRIVATION THUS CAUSED to many women should not be underestimated; nor should the pain caused to them by the licence given to husbands to indulge in extra-marital amours. The archetypal wife was Hera, limited herself to Zeus's bed but continually hurt and humiliated by his roving amours. And indeed the whole ancient attitude to marriage was by decent modern standards an outrage to women's feelings.

A girl in her early teens is betrothed, for family reasons, to someone considerably older than herself whom she may even never have seen before. Plutarch realised that fear would be the dominant emotion of many a tender bride. Women were pushed about. The only mitigation was that divorce was easy, both in Greece and Rome, and in a marriage subsequent to the first a woman might have more choice. Augustus penalised any childless widow aged 20–50 who did not marry again within two years. The way in which high-born women were used as counters in the eugenic, social, and political game is astonishing.

The story of the orator Hortensius is a sufficient example. Wishing to ally himself to that paragon of virtue, the younger Cato, he asked if he could marry his wife, who had borne him three children. Cato agreed, so long as her father consented. We are not told what *she* said; the deal took place. On Hortensius' death Cato remarried the wife, now considerably richer. It is hard to believe that the wives were always, or even often, willing accomplices in such transactions, that they did not find some of the men into whose beds they were shunted positively repellent. And there is one corollary that is hardly ever mentioned, as if it didn't matter: the children of divorced parents (in Greece, probably, and in Rome, one is left to assume) went with the father. But that did not mean that a mother would forget her child. Thirty-seven years after her divorce from Augustus Scribonia voluntarily joined their daughter Julia in exile.

Occasionally the veil is lifted: the wrongs of women were eloquently expressed by Euripides in the mouth of his Medea:

> "Of all things that have life and understanding we women are the most unhappy creatures. First, we must buy a husband for a great sum, and take a master for our bodies, which is an even greater evil. And this is where we put most at stake: we may get a good husband or a bad. For women cannot be divorced without losing their good name, neither can they refuse a husband. . . . But a husband, if he finds his home awkward, can relieve his tedium elsewhere, while we must depend on a single being. They say of us that we pass our lives safely at home, while the men go out to battle. That shows their lack of judgment. I would sooner fight three battles than bear one child."[6]

There were always, of course, the consolations of religion. At Athens a woman could be initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries. Lysias, in love with a *hetaera*, had her initiated: this, if nothing else, he said, her "madam" Nicarete could not take from her. The particular susceptibility of women to religious enthusiasm was recognised in the institution of the Bacchic rites. These, when introduced into Italy, led to the great scandal of 186 B.C. and subsequent repression. But the quieter religion of Isis had an increasing number of women devotees as time went on, though perhaps more among the humbler members of society than the great Roman matrons involved in the state and family cults. "You gave women equal power with men", says one of her hymns.

DANCING MANADE. *(Brygos painter, c. 490 B.C.)*

CHRISTIANITY welcomed women, but as regards freedom and equality with men in this life they were sent back to square one. In the *First Epistle to Timothy* (New English Bible version) we read:

[6] Plato and Aristotle agreed with these sentiments, and later the Stoics. The point is also made eloquently by the old woman slave Syra in Plautus' *Mercator* (817–29), a play based on a Greek one of the 4th century by Philemon.

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> "Women must dress in a becoming manner, modestly and soberly, not decked out with gold or pearls, or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, as befits women who claim to be religious. A woman must be a learner, listening quietly and with due submission. I do not permit a woman to be a teacher, nor must woman domineer over man; she should be quiet. For Adam was created first, and Eve afterwards, and it was not Adam who was deceived; it was the woman who, yielding to deception, fell into sin. Yet she will be saved through motherhood—if only women continue in faith, love and holiness, with a sober mind."

Thus did the Hebrew story of Adam and Eve help to undo the liberalising process of centuries in the Greco-Roman world, and a pattern became established for women in Christendom which has persisted down to the 20th century.

TO SUM UP: there were no doubt plenty of wives who were perfectly contented with their lot, but who would be anathema to the modern enemies of male complacency. Such a one was the younger Pliny's third wife who (he tells us) acquired an interest in literature to please him; learned his forensic speeches by heart and was all agog to hear how they had gone down; listened behind a curtain when he recited in the hope of overhearing compliments to retail to him; and set his poems to music with no teacher save love. But, for an approach to the independence modern feminists seek, we must think of a Spartiate wife of the early 4th century; or a *grande cocotte* of that century hitched up to some wealthy and influential man; or a willing drop-out like the Cynic Hipparchia; or a quiet enjoyer of the garden of Epicurus; or a physician in Hellenistic Greece; or a society woman in the late Roman Republic.

Away

Now, in our separation
that green anorak becomes
a fetish. Bent over
raked soil it hoes weeds
with a peasant patience
turning its hood to understand
the round-robin demands
of a white cat. On clear
days I can see the effect
of its seams, the steel gleam
of zips and the fingertip
touch of nylon promise;
then its padded warmth
pats my shoulder like
a child's comforter.
And, though I no longer
know if this is truth,
the way the winter sun
sometimes flames the face
of the black Tas, I turn
you towards me and each detail
of that gift is bare.

Edwin Brock

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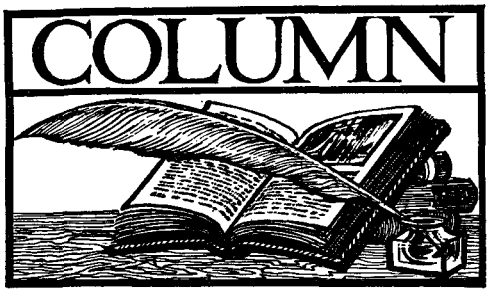

THE DISCUSSION AND controversy provoked by the publication of Count Nikolai Tolstoy's book, *Victims of Yalta*,[1] should by now have ensured that no one need any longer remain in ignorance of one of the most shameful episodes in recent British history. Of course, Count Tolstoy's story is not a new one. It has been told before by Nicholas Bethell in his book *The Last Secret*, but Count Tolstoy has had the advantage of being able to use new material released under the thirty-year rule which was not available to Lord Bethell; and he has also recorded in exhaustive detail the personal recollections of anyone he could find who was in any way involved in the tragedy which forms the subject of his book.

It is the story of the fate, or doom, of the some five to six million Russians who at the end of the last War found themselves dispersed throughout Western and Central Europe, of whom some three millions fell into the hands of the Western Allies as they continued their victorious advance. The members of this huge and heterogeneous mass of humanity was such that it is almost impossible to find any single word which collectively describes them. Some were members of the German armed forces, and as such entitled to treatment as prisoners-of-war (as prescribed by the Hague and Geneva Conventions, though the Soviet Union of course was not a signatory to these agreements). Some had been compulsorily conscripted by Germany to serve as slave labour in the service of the *Reich*. Some were refugees who, having first been overrun by the Germans in the first victorious phases of Operation *Barbarossa*, and having then been threatened by the victorious return of the Red Army, had decided that of the two evils with which they were faced, the German was the lesser. All of them were, for the most part, anonymous units in one of the greatest *Völkerwanderungen* that had taken place in Europe since the Dark Ages. Indeed, at the end of the War, the mere presence of this vast horde of displaced people was enough to make one feel that the Dark Ages had returned.

As a description of these millions of people, even the word "Russian" seemed a misnomer, for thousands of them were members of national minorities: Ukrainians, Cossacks, Georgians, Turcomans, Mongolians, or any of the other ethnic groups which go to make up the Soviet Empire, to whom the Russian state represented only the power of an alien, oppressive, and cruel tyranny. Many indeed were émigrés who, alongside their British allies, had fought decades ago against the establishment of the Bolshevik régime and, having been defeated, had retired to the West before becoming involved, once again, in the advance of the Red Army across Europe.

TO THE ALLIED ARMIES, as the Germans retired in the West and finally collapsed, the presence of this great mass of displaced humanity was a grave embarrassment and presented an awkward problem. What was to do be done with them? The British answer to this question was a simple and brutal one. At a meeting in Moscow in October 1944—known ironically enough as the "Tolstoy" conference—Anthony Eden had agreed with Molotov that all Soviet citizens in British hands should without exception be returned to the Soviet Union, and that their repatriation should be carried out as quickly as possible, whether they wished it or not. Moreover Mr Eden, as he then was, agreed that it was for the Soviet Union to decide who were its own citizens and who were not. In effect, this meant that the Soviet Union laid claim to all Russian prisoners in British hands, whatever their legal status, and without regard to residence, age, or sex.

Such a policy, which henceforward determined British treatment of the Russians who fell into their hands, involved the use of force to induce the Russians to accept repatriation, because they were well aware of the fate that was likely to meet them on their return to the bosom of Mother Russia. As a result, many of them committed or attempted to commit suicide. They forcibly resisted repatriation and when blandishments, lies, trickery and deceit failed to make them change their minds, British soldiers found themselves under the unpleasant necessity of clubbing and bayoneting the prisoners, men, women and children, soldiers and civilians, old and young, into the transports provided for their return, by land and sea, to the Soviet Union. One prisoner, deprived of any other means of self-destruction, attempted suicide by driving a pencil through his eye into his brain.

The fears which inspired such efforts to escape repatriation were in no way exaggerated. It is

[1] *Victims of Yalta*. By NIKOLAI TOLSTOY. Hodder & Stoughton, £9.95; shortly to be published in the USA by Charles Scribner's Sons.

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calculated that, of a total of 2,750,000 Russians returned to the Soviet Union, some 20% were executed out of hand, while most of the remainder were despatched to the Gulag Archipelago to serve sentences varying from six years to life. This was in accordance with the Soviet attitude that anyone who, for whatever reason, had fallen into enemy hands was *ipso facto* a deserter and traitor, while anyone who had been contaminated by contact with Western life (even in a German concentration or labour camp) was necessarily a danger to the Soviet state. If one is shocked by such a policy, one has to remember that the British Foreign Office heartily and enthusiastically collaborated with Stalin in carrying it out. "*We cannot afford to be sentimental about this*", wrote Eden, meaning that no considerations of justice, humanity, or mercy should be allowed to interfere with the objective of placating and appeasing Stalin, whose statesmanship he greatly admired.

The British authorities, however, and primarily the Foreign Office, did not find it altogether easy to carry the Eden/Stalin policy into effect. It involved flagrant breaches of the Hague and Geneva Conventions. It involved British troops in actions against defenceless men, women and children of a kind which should never be required of any soldier. It involved allowing free access to the camps in which prisoners and refugees were accommodated, both in Britain and overseas, to the members of the Russian Repatriation Commission, mostly agents of SMERSH and the NKVD, who used threats and intimidation as well as seductions to persuade the inmates to accept repatriation. Moreover, it became increasingly difficult to conceal from the British public the suicides, the brutalities, the scandals involved in the Foreign Office's policy, which, if they had been known would certainly have provoked profound indignation and violent criticism: thus the Foreign Office was compelled into a disgraceful course of lying, deceit, deception, and suppression and censorship of news which they persisted in until they had brought the whole dirty business to a triumphant conclusion.

As MR PEREGRINE WORSTHORNE has written in the *Sunday Telegraph*, the conduct of the British people and the British armed forces during the Second World War is a matter in which they have taken a legitimate pride, as perhaps the last major, and for a time decisive, contribution they could make to the preservation of civilisation. How was it, then, that at the end of the War others should have committed them to a policy which was in every way at variance with the ideals for which they had fought so bravely?

The origin of that policy is to be found in Anthony Eden's admiration for Stalin, for whom he flattered himself he had a natural understanding and affinity. He even appears to have succeeded in the incredible feat of being fond of him. This favourable impression of Stalin seems to have become the basis of an obstinate determination to foster good relations with him at almost any cost, in which the sacrifice of some millions of Russians did not rate very high, and to ensure that nothing should be done which would thwart the dictator's wishes or offend him in any way.

The "Tolstoy" agreement with Molotov with regard to the repatriation of Russians was a natural consequence of such an attitude; having made it Eden insisted that it should be carried out to the letter, and in this he had the enthusiastic collaboration of his staff at the Foreign Office, in particular Thomas Brimelow (later Lord Brimelow and Permanent Under-Secretary), Sir Patrick Dean, Legal Adviser (and later Ambassador to Washington), John Galsworthy (later Sir John and Ambassador to Mexico), and Mr, now Sir, Geoffrey Wilson (chairman of Oxfam). It was they who bore the main burden of composing the papers, minutes, briefs, notes required to convince the sceptical that Eden's policy was in fact unavoidable. Today such documents make sorry reading in their combination of cynicism and indifference to any kind of humane consideration; and one can even find it in one's heart to be sorry for their authors if they find it necessary today to re-read the comments they wrote so long ago.

THE FOREIGN OFFICE, of course, had various grounds for defending Eden's policy. There was Eden's own view that nothing should be done to arouse Stalin's displeasure. On the whole, experience has shown that such an attitude is not a very good basis for negotiation with the Soviet Union. It was also claimed that only strict adherence to the Tolstoy Agreement would ensure the swift and safe return of British prisoners-of-war whose camps had been overrun by the Red Army in its advance eastward. But, in fact, there appears to be little evidence that this was true; American, like British, prisoners-of-war were promptly and safely returned even though the Americans were noticeably reluctant to carry out the repatriation policy advocated by Eden, and indeed that policy remained in force for two years *after* the last British prisoner-of-war was safely in British hands. And today we are told that Eden's policy should be judged, not with the benefit of hindsight, but "in the context of its times"; of British gratitude to, and desire to please, the great Ally

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which had made such a heroic contribution to winning the War, of public ignorance of the conditions that actually obtained in the Soviet Union, of the belief that only the guilty and the criminal, the deserter and the traitor, could possibly object to repatriation to a Motherland basking under the humane and beneficent dictatorship of a kindly Uncle Joe. But this was not a defence which the Foreign Office was likely to put forward for its policy. Indeed, one of its greatest anxieties was precisely to suppress any public knowledge of what it was about, on the probably correct assumption that it would provoke a storm of indignation which would make it impossible to continue on the course it had chosen.

The British people has many vices as well as many virtues; but they are not murderers and the Foreign Office was perfectly right to conclude that even in the euphoria of victory and gratitude to an ally, they were not likely to connive in what was in effect, in the short or the long term, a policy of mass murder.

READING Count Tolstoy's devastating and terrible book, one cannot help wishing at times that Lord Avon, Lord Brimelow, Sir Patrick Dean, *et al.* had been made personally responsible for carrying out the policy they had designed; that is to say, for bludgeoning and bayoneting defenceless men, women and children hysterical with the fear of repatriation to Russia, for the lying, treachery and deception required to persuade men and women into certain death and destruction, for sewing up a jugular severed with the broken glass of the smashed window of an army transport. One feels that in such circumstances even their hearts might have failed them at the consequences of their policy. But as is usual in such cases, the actual dirty work was left to less exalted mortals; in this one, to the officers and other ranks of the British Army. But here again, as in the case of the British public, the Foreign Office, to its exasperation, encountered a strange reluctance, a singular squeamishness, in facing the facts necessitated by the policy of forcible repatriation.

British soldiers, it seemed, had an irrational aversion to using brute force against helpless and disarmed prisoners and refugees. Brutal and licentious the soldiery may be, but it seemed that they drew the line at actions which wholly recommended themselves to diplomats. They could not be expected, of course, to understand the higher reasoning which lay behind their orders. Theirs was but to bludgeon and bayonet, ignore the screams of men and women condemned to certain death, torture or slow extermination in the Gulag Archipelago. As Lord Avon said, we cannot afford to be sentimental about that sort of thing.

I cannot help being touched by the example of a friend and war-time colleague, Lt.-Col. David Rooke, commanding the 7th battalion of the Hampshire Regiment, who was given the task of transporting one of the last batches of Russians remaining in British hands. He completed his task, but having done so wrote to inform his superior officer that if required to repeat it he would reluctantly be compelled to disobey an order. But Colonel Rooke was only one among others who shared the same sense of nausea at the consequences of the Foreign Office's policy. Such feelings were irritating to the Foreign Office, but what was worse was that they seemed to be shared by the higher command, including such distinguished officers as General Eisenhower, Field Marshal Alexander, and Field Marshal Montgomery who equally, as soldiers, seemed to feel that this was not the kind of duty which they or their troops should be called upon to do.

The case of Field Marshal Alexander, who in fact had been a comrade-in-arms of some of the prisoners during the British intervention in the Civil War in Russia, was particularly irritating and frustrating; for apart from his immense personal prestige among all ranks and services in the Allied armed forces, as Commander-in-Chief in Italy he came under joint Anglo-American control and no directive could be issued to him without American consent and agreement. The American State Department, however, showed an unfortunate scepticism about the entire basis of the Foreign Office's policies. They objected on ethical, legal, and humanitarian grounds, and in particular insisted that it was an offence against America's traditional policy with regard to the grant of political asylum and in breach of the Hague and the Geneva Conventions.

Thus there were arguments and delays. In the interval the soldiers showed a deplorable propensity to relax security precautions in the camps to allow prisoners the opportunity to escape, and to interpret more liberally and humanely the screening procedures by which the goats designated for repatriation were divided from the sheep who were saved from the slaughter. Nevertheless, in the end, the whole tragic and sorry business was concluded to the Foreign Office's satisfaction. By the summer of 1946, in Operations *Keelhaul* and *East Wind*, the last few remaining prisoners in Allied hands liable to repatriation, numbering about 1,000, were surrendered into the insatiable maw of their Soviet countrymen. The code names assigned to the two operations were perhaps an indication of the soldiers' contempt and distaste for the

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barbarism of the policy of which they were compelled to be the unwilling instruments.

COUNT TOLSTOY'S BOOK is the story of a great historical crime, and it inevitably raises the question of what, if anything, can now be done to make amends for it. The simple answer would seem to be: not very much. *The Times*, in a leading article, has proposed that there should be some form of enquiry into the facts of the case; but I myself feel inclined to agree with Dame Rebecca West that any form of enquiry under any of the procedures at present available to us is more likely to lead to further confusion and cover-up rather than to full exposure of the facts.

On the other hand, there are perhaps some possible steps which might, in however small a degree, make some recompense for the past while at the same time affording some safeguards for the future. Despite Count Tolstoy's exhaustive researches, there are still some gaps in his story, because there are some documents which the Foreign Office refuses to release on the grounds that they are "personally sensitive", meaning, presumably, that they may be damaging to the reputations of persons still living. In a matter of such importance, involving the fate of millions of people, such considerations should have no weight and the Foreign Office should be compelled to release the documents they continue to suppress, so that both historians and the public should be in possession of all the facts on which an impartial judgment should be based.

Secondly, it is of considerable importance that the Foreign Office should now state officially whether they still regard as valid the legal arguments advanced by Sir Patrick Dean to justify the measures taken to implement the Tolstoy agreement between Eden and Molotov, and that their attitude should be subjected to expert legal scrutiny, preferably on an international basis. For this is a matter which may affect the fate of any future prisoner-of-war captured either in British uniform or the uniform of any other civilised country.

Lastly, it would seem imperative that measures should be taken to ensure the public accountability of civil servants operating behind a curtain of anonymity, deception and misrepresentation; this applies not only to the Foreign Office but throughout the civil service. *Victims of Yalta* is a tragic example of what may happen when such accountability is lacking and the curtain proves to be impenetrable. If, now, there is very little that can be done to alter the effects of that tragedy, the very least we can attempt is to try to ensure, so far as we can, and at whatever cost, that nothing like it shall ever happen here again. *R*

Jerusalem

Undermining walls, your soul is as naked
as a synagogue window from which age
has peeled the paint. Burning bridges, you
set dreams free towards their final sweep.
From the silence of limbs in winter sleep, God,
my soul wrestles with the magic of your springtime.
A mountain is sundered by the fury of flowering,
while Jerusalem, still fasting to ward off nightmares,
wakes in astonishment to a shower of primaeval, rocky light,
to an appointed day rooted in history

David Rokeah
translated by Ruth and Matthew Mead

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NOTES & TOPICS

Haltwhistle Remembered

On a Dialect's Difficulties—By JOHN WEIGHTMAN

I WAS ASTONISHED and fascinated by Brian Lee's "Letter from Haltwhistle" in the February number of ENCOUNTER; never had I expected to see the name of that remote little place on the cover of a cosmopolitan review. I suddenly realised what a Nambikwara Indian might feel, if he unexpectedly came across Lévi-Strauss's account of his tribe in *Tristes Tropiques*.

It so happens that I was brought up in Haltwhistle from the age of seven, and feel that it provided me with so "native" a setting that, ever since, I have used it as a yard-stick for measuring phenomena elsewhere. The West-Northumbrian dialect Mr Lee comments on so interestingly was my only language for a long time, literally my mother-tongue, and although I no longer speak it fluently—if, indeed, the term "fluent" could ever be applied to the masculine mode of that speech since, as I remember, only the women used it as if the words came trippingly off the tongue—I suppose it will soon begin reasserting itself again from below when, in old age, all the upper layers of linguistic memory crumble away to reveal the substratum of childhood. I can look forward to being as hopelessly unintelligible as an Eskimo, in some London geriatric ward.

Actually, my father was an East Northumbrian, a Geordie. I was born near Newcastle, in a place with the promising name of Black Callerton, and at first I spent only the holidays at Haltwhistle, on the small-holding rented by my maternal grandfather "oot-by." I cannot recall my father's way of talking, but according to my mother, who is still here to tell the tale, he was so much a Geordie that, in spite of being a practised public-speaker, he could never pronounce the word "table" except as "'tjɛbl̩" (that is, with a heavily aspirated t, an intercolated yod and a dark l) whereas my mother's Haltwhistle pronunciation was "tebl" or "tɛbl." However, since I was an only child up to the age of nine and saw relatively little of my father, I suppose I was too much influenced by my mother's speech ever to speak thorough-going Geordie.

There is no burr, or velar *r*, in Haltwhistle, and I remember that when I began learning French at eleven and needed to use the velar *r*, I had to practise the sound consciously, although I was perfectly familiar with it in the speech of my Geordie relations. Perhaps, without being fully conscious of the fact, I was rather lost for a time between the eastern and western dialects with their markedly different rhythms and phonetic patterns, and this may help to explain why, as far back as I can remember, I have always been so keenly aware of the contingent nature of all language—including the Haltwhistle dialect itself, even though its vocabulary and constructions may seem "truer" to me than any others, especially in moments of fatigue or recessiveness.

THERE IS A STRONG ELEMENT of nostalgia in Mr Lee's account, as if, coming from the bland, civilised, generalised south, he had stumbled, in Haltwhistle, on a pocket of archaism, which satisfied some Rousseauistic thirst for a pure, self-contained, rural community, a microcosm with its own language and customs. He would have been still more impressed, had he known the place fifty years ago, before the introduction of radio and television, when cars were a rarity and hardly anybody went on holiday, or even left the town for as much as a day without some special reason.

The price of the local farm butter was fixed every Thursday in the forenoon, and its fluctuations gave rise to much female comment; a shilling a pound spelt disaster; most people lived at subsistence level, but Danish butter (although, for some reason, not Danish bacon) was considered an inferior, rather shaming product, like baker's bread. The chapels were full on Sunday evenings. Families went for walks in groups and in the best clothes they could muster; and a pennyworth of sweets was a luxury.

I occasionally wonder if my recollections are

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accurate, or if I am imagining some of the details retrospectively, on the basis of Victorian novels about working-class life. Was it normal, for instance, in largish families, for the "taws" or whipping-strap to hang at the end of the mantelpiece to be conveniently at hand for the chastising of the children? I suddenly asked myself this question a few weeks ago, while I was watching the film, *Padre Padrone*, about village-life in Sardinia, and identifying with the young hero, who had about as much in common with his father as I had with my grandfather.

It is remarkable that, olive groves and Catholicism apart, life among the sheep on the hills in Sardinia should remind me so forcibly of life among the sheep on the fells at Haltwhistle: two totally unrefined versions of pastoral! There were no blood vendettas, or at least none that I knew about, but weird things went on at the remoter farms, and a great deal of existence was as raw, fumbling and inarticulate as in the Sardinian film. How easily I can enter into the spirit of the phrase that Mr Lee applies to an aspect of Haltwhistle: "a deep primal dumbness", and how often I have hoped that it might be "a clownish virtue"! Indeed, when I am feeling confident, I think it probably is: *le degré zéro* of the intellect, which is ultimately truer than any thought, and to which it is prudent to return between thoughts.

I CAN UNDERSTAND Mr Lee's sense of the individuality of the town. It lies at the end of a valley, with its back to the wilderness, since there is nothing between it and Scotland. The roads do not run northwards, but only east and west. Incidentally, I think Mr Lee may be slightly wrong in his interpretation of "doon-by" as referring to the west as well as the east. I have always taken it to mean that which lies down the valley, in the direction of the county town, Newcastle: that is, in the first place, to the larger, more populous, urbanised, industrialised, garrulous, Geordie world, and then, beyond that, to the south, to England and London, where people "talk proper", governmental decisions are taken, and the Royal Family and the Archbishop of Canterbury go about their incomprehensible business.

It is difficult to render this feeling of the successive thicknesses of essentially foreign humanity lying to the east and south of the town. I have met people from the Western Highlands and the Orkneys who seemed to integrate more easily into the national atmosphere than I ever could. To me, England was always vividly present, imaginatively, through the books I read. But when I entered it in real life, I had the impression of always being at a slight distance from it—as if Haltwhistle, with its different language and customs, had not been altogether in England—of always having to play a part rather different from my true self, whatever that might be, of never quite getting the hang of things, of being, in fact, an archetypal "outsider." I have often supposed that this might be a peculiarity or an affliction special to me; but Mr Lee, approaching Haltwhistle from the outside, describes with uncanny perceptiveness an attitude that I recognise from the inside. I would not use the term "doon-byer" aggressively; how could I? I have lived "doon-by" for nearly forty years and I have been married to a "doon-byer" for the same length of time, but I still feel, when I am talking to an *echt* Haltwhistlean, that what the French call the *extra-texte* or the *infra-texte* is working to perfection, whatever our temperamental differences may be.

Some years ago, I had a remarkable proof of the strength of this *extra-texte* at a party in Chelsea. When I walked into the room, there was no one present that I knew, and my friend, the hostess, was in the kitchen and so did not effect any introductions. I said no more than "Good evening" to the assembled company, but I learned afterwards that one of the guests immediately went to her to ask: "Where in Northumberland does that man come from?" He turned out to be another Haltwhistlean—although slightly alien, since he came from the Town Foot not the Fair Hill. He had spotted my origin from the peculiar ring of the voice on the southern greeting, and also no doubt from some accompanying Haltwhistlean mannerism.

I RECOGNISE THIS intense localism as a fact, and I enjoy the emotions connected with it. But I do not share Mr Lee's nostalgia for the protection of such archaic societies. However close and warm the human relationships within them, they are doomed by the spread of education and social mobility and, in any case, their primeval nature is far more apparent than real.

I was always dimly aware that there had probably been much purer, stronger forms of provincialism before the point at which I came in. What I experienced was the fag-end of an atmosphere already long affected by external forces, that had decentred it irretrievably, supposing it had ever had a centre. There was the Roman Wall, a constant reminder that history has been a flux since time immemorial. I played along the Wall as a child, before the new archaeological-cum-touristic fervour had cemented the loose stones back into place and provided car-parks for multi-lingual visitors. I remember standing in the wind, looking at the obtuse faces

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of the sheep and the swarms of rabbits (now practically eliminated) and wondering what sort of Latin the soldiers had spoken and what, in any case, they had thought they were doing in a place so outlandish and so metaphysically abstract.

Then there were the many Nonconformist Chapels, built a century or so before my time on an unimaginable wave of religious excitement. They were still well attended. We read the Bible and learned dozens of the old hymns by heart, but the religion itself was obviously as dead as mutton, as I suddenly realised one day about the age of fourteen, during a service and bang in the middle of a hymn. The Primitive Methodist building in which I spent so many baffling Sunday afternoons has been sold and converted into maisonettes, and the chapel proper is now a storehouse. But I think I have at last understood, thanks to a very long détour via Pascal, Léon Bloy, Claudel and Simone Weil, what religion is supposed to be about. Not that I am any nearer to being a Christian; I am still just as instinctively pagan as when I listened to the trilling of the curlew or the drumming of the snipe but, if necessary, I think I could now put forward an explanation or justification of the Christian myth in terms of a complex sado-masochistic response to the Absurd. All languages, whether primary (i.e. verbal) or secondary (i.e. religious, metaphysical, legal, scientific, etc.) are contingent, at the same time as they represent various historical attempts—some good, some bad, some crude, some more sophisticated—to cope, precisely, with the general contingency of man.

BRIAN LEE'S ARTICLE leaves me reflecting mainly on two linguistic points. In the first place, a great deal of what is important in any community exists outside language, never rises to the level of articulation unless some talented person happens to find appropriate words, and is expressed at best in *le gestuel*, those largely unconscious, half-acquired, half-spontaneous movements which accompany speech or operate in the intervals of speech. I don't remember much of what my grandfather said, and he always seemed to treat speech itself as an undignified lapse from silence. But he had a dense, solid presence, which suggested a close-knit pattern of assumptions, held in common with others of his kind, with whom he would sit on Sunday mornings, without any of them uttering a word for minutes at a time. I am not saying that the assumptions were in any way remarkable, but only that they appeared to operate effectively in the area in which he moved.

In the second place, a language which is not fixed in writing can be extremely fluid. Mr Lee comments on the fact that some Haltwhistleans seemed to play with words. I think, rather, that often they had no settled idea of forms or constructions or areas of meaning. Some things are definitely wrong (for instance, Mr Lee puts the word "beasts" in the plural with an *s*, but I remember it only as an invariable form "beast", like "sheep", just as I am sure that Mr Lee has confused East and West Northumbrian in rendering "my wife" as "*wor lass*" instead of "*ooer lass*"), but other things can be said in various ways without any apparent distinction in meaning.

In my teens, when I first became interested in linguistics, I tried to work out a pattern; but I eventually gave up, because the variations struck me as chaotic, and the idiolects as much more idiosyncratic than in standard English. I could place a given person topographically, more or less, according to a particular lilt or a half-vowel, but I could not systematise the grammatical forms, and this leads me to believe that pronunciation is more immediately collective and imperative than accidence or syntax. Only last summer, I listened carefully to my mother while she was recounting a lengthy anecdote, and I noticed that she used three different forms of the second person singular pronoun: "*thəoo*", "*tha*" and "*ta*." But they didn't seem to correspond consistently to the emphatic or non-emphatic positions or to the nominative, accusative, and dative cases.

IT MAY BE, OF COURSE, that all English dialects have long been corrupted by the standard written language, and that speech forms were purer when local cultures were entirely oral. But I rather doubt this. A lot of people who could read never opened a book, and if they had occasion to quote from a newspaper, they did so in an artificial voice, which indicated that they were making a spontaneous distinction between their vernacular and the learned tongue. Also, in addition to the personal peculiarities of the speakers, the dialect varied collectively from one neighbouring hamlet to another, even if they were only a mile or two apart.

From this I conclude that, even when the population was completely illiterate, the speech forms must have fluctuated incessantly, each individual grasping what he or she could of them, but of necessity being unable to carve out a coherent system from a mass that was itself uncertain. To put it in Saussurian terms, there must have been any number of *paroles*, while *la langue* was a shifting, unreliable, ultimately indefinable entity, i.e. not really an entity at all. Even in the standard language, of course, *la*

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langue cannot be finite, but in an unwritten dialect it must be much more limitless.

People might not even be bothered by incomprehensibility. I had a dear, and far from stupid, aunt, whose favourite and peculiar ejaculation was "*Lor fines*!", presumably a corruption of some invocation of the Deity. She couldn't explain where she had learnt it or what it meant but, in spite of our teasing, she went on using it regardless, as if it gave her some definite emotional satisfaction.

HAVING ARTICULATED these reactions to Mr Lee's article, I now see clearly for the first time why I am instinctively opposed to those populist linguists, in both England and France, who have a cavalier attitude to the standard language, as being an unnecessarily finicky or pretentious ideal, or who imagine that a left-wing attitude in politics inevitably involves a preference for lower-class speech-forms, dialects, and local accents.

This, to my mind, is inverted snobbery, and just as mistaken as to suppose that an educated accent always indicates evolved thought or, alternatively, a guaranteed absence of subversive thought. Anyone deeply attached to a local form of speech knows that it only works within its limited area. It enlightens the speaker about human nature within that area but, like all particular languages, it can be a barrier to wider understanding.

Any linguist ought to know that all forms of speech are arbitrary, and that the more unsettled the arbitrariness, the less satisfactory the situation. A standard national language, rightly understood, is a democratic ideal; that is, an attempt to achieve a collective absolute in a field where, in the last resort, no absolute is possible. A respectful, purist approach to the standard language, as being the highest form, indicates a worthy effort to organise the inevitable arbitrariness, so that the signifieds are made tolerably stable in relation to the signifiers, and the traffic rules of the grammar are reduced to an agreed order.

I wish I could exclaim, in the Haltwhistle dialect, "Long live all attempts to establish an arbitrary, human order in the face of the contingent!" But, alas, to express the idea, I have to have recourse to this alien, but superior, southern tongue.

How to (and How Not to) Seek Peace in the Middle East

On the Shortness of Memories—By ELIE KEDOURIE

PRESIDENT SADAT'S recent visit to Jerusalem and the events which have followed it in quick succession are in their unexpectedness and possibly far-reaching effects, difficult to parallel in recent diplomatic history. Greatly different as were the protagonists and the issues involved, the Nazi-Soviet Pact of the summer of 1939 springs to mind as a similar event which threw into the melting-pot previous assumptions and calculations. It would have been a fair question to ask why, say, British or French policy-makers did not in advance consider the likelihood and repercussions of such a *coup* or, to take a nearer and more comparable event, why the Israeli and US governments were caught off balance by the October 1973 war.

So now, too, it is interesting—to put the matter no higher—to ask why Sadat's initiatives seemed, initially at any rate, to have occasioned in Washington not perhaps consternation, but certainly surprise and embarrassment. A development of this kind seemed to go against all the assumptions and expectations which have led the US administration, in the months preceding the visit, to advocate a "comprehensive" settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict to be worked out at a Geneva conference where, under the joint auspices of the US and the USSR, all the parties to the dispute would be represented. One such party which the US, in the face of adamant Israeli objections, was until very recently endeavouring somehow to include, was the Palestine Liberation Organisation. Though nothing has changed in the aims and stance of the PLO, which have been exactly the same before and after Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, it is a measure of the disorientation produced by this event that

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President Carter should (at a press conference held on 15 December 1977) vehemently denounce the PLO. By their negative and intransigent attitudes, he declared, they have removed themselves from any immediate prospect of participation in peace negotiations.

This kind of somersault, which may or may not prove politically advantageous, does lead us to suspect that the assumptions on which the earlier policy was based were perhaps insufficiently critical. Did they not have built into them elements which might have allowed in advance for some such contingencies as have now eventuated? And here too a parallel could prove illuminating and even perhaps—were it not so difficult to learn from history—instructive.

As is well known, it was a British initiative which led to giving the Zionist movement an internationally recognised standing in the affairs of Palestine, and may thus be said to have brought into existence the conflict which the US is now so deeply engaged in attempting to settle—engaged in a manner utterly unforeseen during the whole period running from the Balfour Declaration to the establishment of the state of Israel. Less than two decades after the Balfour Declaration was published, serious disturbances led the British to reconsider their commitment (enshrined in the League-of-Nations mandate) to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine. These disturbances may be seen to stand at the beginning of a decade, running roughly from 1937 to 1947, in which British policy in Palestine and in the Middle East took on a character such that the historian cannot help bringing it to mind when he reads his morning newspaper and wonders about the exact meaning of some pronouncement by the President of the US, a communiqué by the Department of State, a declaration by an Arab public figure or a counter-declaration by his Israeli counterpart.

Why is it that in spite of the fact that the US is so different in its circumstances and outlook from Britain, recent events have something in them of the *déjà vu*, something which powerfully evokes the earlier period?

IT IS GENERALLY ACCEPTED, and it seems also to be true, that the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine was a failure for British policy, and seriously damaged British interests in the Middle East. But we have to ask what this policy was, and whether the failure was fortuitous, and due to circumstances which nobody could have reasonably foreseen—or whether the failure was inherent in the policy itself. Inherent in it because the policy was not well thought-out, and was thus fated to disappoint the hopes placed on it.

The policy had its origin in the Arab Revolt which began in Palestine in 1936—a disturbance serious enough to force the British Government to rethink its Palestine policy and its stance towards Zionism. This process of rethinking went on over a period in the Foreign and Colonial Offices, and eventually involved also the Cabinet. It was obviously a response to a changing situation, and fascinating as a detailed account of it would be, it would be out of place here. But this much can be described briefly. What crystallised at the end of this process was the profound belief (which became fully manifest in 1938–39) that the conflict in Palestine could not be isolated from other Middle Eastern issues in which vital British interests were involved; that for the sake of these other vital issues other parties—aside, that is, from the Zionists and the Palestine Arabs—should be allowed a say over the settlement of the conflict; and that their desiderata should in some sense and to some extent be satisfied. These other parties were neighbouring Arab states who, indeed, ever since the outbreak of disorders in Palestine, had been pressing on the British Government, more or less insistently, the case of their fellow-Arabs in Palestine.

The British decision that this pressure should be acceded to and recognised as legitimate, issued in the Palestine Conferences which met in London at the beginning of 1939 (the plural form being used in the official designation in order to mark and ratify the Arab refusal to sit in one conference hall with the Jews). Arab states were officially represented. In retrospect, this may be seen as one of the most important landmarks in the history of the Palestine conflict. Two benefits were anticipated by the British from this unprecedented acknowledgement of the right of foreign states to interfere in the affairs of a British-administered territory. It was hoped that the Arab states would exert a moderating influence on the Palestine Arab leadership, and persuade them to agree to a settlement which, in any case, would considerably limit the British commitment to Zionism; and it was thought that this signal recognition by Britain of the standing of Arab states in the Palestine question would secure their friendship in the disturbed and dangerous international situation which was looming so large in 1939.

THESE EXPECTATIONS failed. The Arab states proved unable to persuade the Mufti of Jerusalem (who was then the most powerful Palestine Arab leader) to settle for the important and significant concessions to Arab demands made in the White Paper. It is also very doubtful whether this

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policy served to secure Arab friendship in the Second World War. What is at any rate beyond doubt is that pro-Axis sympathies and actions ceased to be a threat to the Allies in the Arab world only when the Axis no longer was the invincible power it had seemed to be after the fall of France. But whatever the hopes and calculations which led the British government officially to recognise the right of Arab states to interfere in the affairs of Palestine, there is no doubt that the policy was a great blunder, the consequences of which are even now being felt.

If the pacification of Palestine was thought to require great concessions to be made to the Palestine Arabs, it was perfectly feasible for such concessions to be made without introducing into the conflict a large number of new parties. For there is no doubt that the introduction of these parties made the conflict more, rather than less, difficult to settle. Implicit in British policy was the assumption that because the Arab states were deeply concerned about their brethren in Palestine—which may have been true—therefore it followed that they would all be of one mind in seeking a settlement. The very opposite was in fact true. The policies and interests of various Arab states in respect of Palestine varied a great deal, and they were potentially and actually in conflict. And these inter-Arab conflicts did not alleviate but, on the contrary, tremendously complicated and envenomed the Palestine conflict. I may say in passing that these inter-Arab rivalries and disagreements were not something which became known only after the event. Evidence of their existence was available in 1936–39 to the advisers of the British government who, however, chose to ignore it.

ANOTHER FEATURE OF British policy in the decade 1937–47 comes to mind while considering the present situation. In 1945–47 Palestine once again became a highly critical issue in British policies relating to the Middle East. Britain was then still, to all outward appearance, the paramount power in the area. Great British interests were involved here: oil, which now loomed larger than before; and defence against the Soviet Union. The Kremlin, after its long isolation, was now emerging as a formidable threat, over a wide perimeter to be sure, but also especially in the Middle East where, therefore, the friendship of the Arab states was believed to be as important as it had been thought in 1939. These states were bound by a variety of ties to Great Britain; but the ties were, in many important cases, under great strain over issues peculiar to each state, and not particularly involved with the conflict in Palestine. But British policy-makers chose—again in the face of much evidence—so to play things as to make the Palestine dispute the crucial issue in the Middle East in terms of which everything was to be judged. It was the outcome on which everything was to be deliberately staked. Moreover, the solution of the problem had to satisfy not only the Palestine Arabs, but also all the members of the Arab League. This was all-in comprehensiveness. In the third volume of his memoirs Hugh Dalton (Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Attlee administration) quotes an entry from his diary dating from January 1947 which provides a telling critique as much of Ernest Bevin's policy as of later attempts at comprehensive solutions.

> "I have tried several times in Cabinet [Dalton recorded] to get them to agree to partition as the best solution. I have urged that, instead of trying to make a synthetic glue of all the Arab States, including Egypt, we should try to split them. . . ."

But Dalton, as he wrote, failed to make much headway with Bevin.

Bevin's policy failed—failed in the sense that when it came to war the Zionists could not be defeated; failed precisely because it came to a war, in which it was Britain's friends and allies who were defeated and humiliated; and failed, finally, in the sense that what took place in Palestine in 1948 made British problems with various Arab states not easier, but more difficult to deal with. It was an ambitious policy, but it was ill-judged and reckless. Ill-judged because, whether the Zionists won or lost, it was highly speculative whether the British would in any way benefit; and this because it was simply not true that Palestine was at the centre of all Middle Eastern problems.

THE PARALLEL BETWEEN British policies then and prevalent US views now should be apparent. In both cases there is the strongly-held belief that the Palestine problem is at the centre of all Middle Eastern issues (and with the occasionally added rider nowadays that the PLO is at the centre of the Palestine problem). And there is a second belief, as strongly held: to be settled, the Palestine problem requires the participation of all parties with any shadow of a claim to participate—requiring, in the current terminology, a "comprehensive" solution.

But more than a parallel is involved here. British policies over Palestine in the decade 1937–47 established a conventional wisdom about the Middle East which has become widespread and influential not least in American official (and academic) circles. The USA did not become seriously involved in Middle Eastern affairs until the Second World War, and did not become a dominating factor in them until some

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time after that war. A reader of the published collections of US State Department papers relating to this area from the outbreak of the Arab revolt in Palestine onwards will be impressed by the extent to which American officials implicitly accepted the assumptions which underlay British policies from 1937. But these were assumptions, let it be remembered, which had been late in making their appearance, and which had been a response to a particular international situation; assumptions, moreover, which were remote from the political realities, and which proved profitless, and indeed highly damaging to British interests!

CURIOUSLY ENOUGH THESE SAME ASSUMPTIONS underlie, perhaps unwittingly, a document which is admittedly not official, but to which later events have given a particular importance. This is the so-called Brookings Report on the Middle East (it appeared in December 1975), the analysis and conclusions of which seem to have been adopted by official agencies.[1] Like the British policy-makers of 1937–47, the Brookings Report considers the Palestine conflict as the crux in the Middle East. It is, of course, undoubtedly true that the Palestine conflict is crucial for Israel and for some of its Arab opponents. But does it have the same over-riding importance for the USA? And if it has, is it the case that the Brookings proposals are the best way of dealing with it?

> "The United States has a vital interest [the Report declares] in the establishment of a stable peace in the Middle East."

Taken as a bare general statement, the assertion seems unexceptionable. But is it not really to be qualified? One may observe in passing that if today American influence is so great in the Middle East, this is the fortunate outcome of a war (that of October 1973). But leaving this aside, should not one consider whether it is really the case that *any* peace, provided it is stable, will be consonant with the interests of the USA? Supposing it was the "stable peace" of Eastern Europe, or of parts of the Far East today? To answer this question is to suggest that US interest in a stable peace cannot be absolute and unqualified. The point is perhaps elementary; but it is worth making not only for its own sake, but also because the statement which evokes it is couched in that rhetoric of general principles resort to which is a standing temptation in a democracy, but which can be so misleading and so dangerous.

> "The United States [the Report again says] has a strong interest in the security, independence, and well-being of Israel and the Arab states of the area and in the friendship of both."

Again this is unexceptionable, but the Report goes on to say that "their security and future development will remain in jeopardy until a durable settlement is concluded." Here, too, we have unqualified prognostications which nothing in the situation can possibly authorise. For is it not conceivable that the very search for a "durable" settlement between Arabs and Israelis will so exacerbate matters, and arouse among various parties such fears for their security and interests, that tensions in the area will be *increased* rather than lessened? Again, may it not be the case that "a durable settlement" will do nothing to provide "security and future development"? This is simply because the political and social problems of the Middle East are such as to preclude stability in any conceivable future. The Arab world today is the prey of an ideological and activist style of politics which is not compatible with stability. The legitimacy of many of its régimes is simply that derived from the sword. The disparity in the population, power, and wealth of the various states is exactly such as to provide a temptation for one state to lay its hands on the resources or territory of a neighbour, and for that neighbour to take pre-emptive measures—whether forcible or not—to prevent such an occurrence. The list of civil upsets and inter-state disputes in the Arab world during the last decade which have nothing to do with the Palestine conflict is enough to show that a promise of "security and future development" to follow the settlement of this conflict is vain and delusive.

> "The United States [the Report also declares] has a strong interest in the unimpeded flow of Middle Eastern oil to itself and to its European and Japanese allies."

This, too, is unexceptionable. Furthermore, it is given point by the embargo of 1973. But one has to say this: it is unsafe to link the two issues in a manner such as to lead to a belief that the supply of oil can be made secure by a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The supply of oil is by far the larger and more formidable issue. The issue is this: whether it is consistent with their security that the United States and its allies should be so utterly dependent for a vital commodity on a source of supply which is outside their control. A new Arab-Israeli war may, it is true, once

[1] The Report was produced by a committee which included, among others, Professor Zbigniew Brzezinski and Professor William Quandt (now, respectively, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, and Office Director for Middle East and North African Affairs at the National Security Council).

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again interrupt this supply. But is it not prudent to consider that even if this conflict were to disappear the threat of such interruption would remain? Such a threat must figure in the plans of any potential enemy, and can be minimised only if the Americans are known to be able and willing to counter it. The real question here concerns the steps that can be taken to prevent such a catastrophe—and this problem is such as to reduce to quite modest proportions the Arab-Israeli conflict. If such a threat were guarded against, the Arab-Israeli conflict would not loom so large. The contrary is not the case.

BUT IT IS SOMETIMES SAID that Saudi Arabia—the largest supplier of oil—must be kept friendly, and that the principal means to this end must be a solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict which would be favourable to the Arab side. It is by no means clear what such a solution would have to be since Arab views have been in this matter more or less irreconcilable. It is also true that large interests are at stake for the USA in Saudi Arabia. But it by no means follows that a settlement—even a pro-Arab settlement—of the Arab-Israeli conflict will necessarily safeguard these interests. Such a settlement will not do away with radicalism and instability in the Arab world, and will thus by no means lessen the threat to the present Saudi régime. It may even, conceivably, increase it. More than this, if the USA has great interests at stake in Saudi Arabia, the stake of the Saudi régime in Saudi Arabia is even greater. To preserve these interests, the Saudi régime needs the friendship and protection of the USA just as much as, or perhaps more than, the USA needs Saudi friendship and good will.

CONNECTED WITH THE FORMIDABLE problems created by insecure oil supply is the other formidable problem presented by "petrodollars"; their effects on capital markets, on the mechanism of international finance, and on the welfare and prosperity of the poorer countries. This, again, transcends by far in significance the Arab-Israeli conflict.

It is, if at all, only faintly related to it. The principal oil-exporting countries are said to accumulate external balances at the rate of $45 billion a year. A large part of this accumulated surplus is believed to be invested in short-term loans in the Western money markets. It is not necessary to assume ill will on the part of the lenders to believe that this is a highly dangerous situation. These lenders are relatively inexperienced in dealing with international capital markets, nor can they have the same pressing concern as the free industrial countries for the health and stability of international trade and finance on which their prosperity in the end depends. The short-term loans in which so many of the "petrodollars" are invested are used to meet the needs of the governments of the poorer countries whose accumulated debts are said probably to amount now to over $200 billion. For these poorer countries to be kept afloat, their debts have to be refinanced by the Western banks. These banks thus find themselves in the position of borrowing (petrodollars) short in order to lend long. The perils of such an arrangement do not need to be spelled out.

An equally perilous prospect in the long term is presented by this enormous shift of capital resources to the oil-producing countries. The income from the oil accrues directly to governments who thus become the preponderating economic power in the countries which they govern with all that this implies in the way of *dirigisme*, "socialism", and similar interventions —which must be more or less crude, capricious, and harmful—in the market. Where international investment is concerned, this means that private venture capital (which before 1939 was very successful in industrialising large parts of the world and greatly enhancing material prosperity) becomes less and less important. As loans are now made *by* governments, they are also made *to* governments. These are by and large the governments of the poorer countries of Asia, Africa, and South America, and their investment record is (as is well known) dim and dismal. The capital which the oil producers have succeeded in extracting from the rest of the world will, thus, in very many instances be used inefficiently and wastefully, to the detriment of employment and international trade, and thus to the detriment of the free world. Used also in shoring up and maintaining régimes whose interests and instincts are far removed from those of the free world.

Considering the magnitude of the problems involved in obtaining a secure supply of oil, and those created by the siphoning off to the OPEC countries of so much wealth, it seems absurd and pathetic of the Report to declare that US efforts "to establish greater economic stability and to help manage the growing economic interdependence among nations more effectively are likely to be frustrated" so long as the Arab-Israeli conflict goes on. This is like claiming that efforts to eradicate cancer are likely to be frustrated so long as a cure for the common cold has not been found.

THE REPORT HAS ALSO SOMETHING to say about the means of settling the conflict. Here it is absolutely unequivocal. It declares that the settlement has to be "comprehensive"—a term

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lately become very popular and which we may suspect to have been launched on its career by this Report.

As has been said, the fearful complication which the Palestine conflict assumed dates precisely from the decision of the British government to give in to the pressure of the Arab states, and formally to recognise their right to intervene in the dispute. This was because there were now involved a large number of parties with incompatible, and even irreconcilable, interests, whose stance was governed by a multitude of calculations which had little to do with Palestine. The search for a "comprehensive" solution may exacerbate the situation rather than remedy it. To "unfreeze" the situation by a search for "comprehensive" solutions may be as unsafe as to keep it "frozen"—a prospect by which the writers of the Report are appalled. May it not be the case, anyway, that this is a conflict for which no acceptable solution can be devised? That the problem will not be solved, but will perhaps simply disappear in circumstances as yet unknown?

THE POLICY which the Report advocates is "comprehensive" in an even more drastic sense. For it has gone so far as to propose—and recent American policy at one point adopted the proposal—that the Soviet Union should be invited to have a share in the making of the "comprehensive" settlement. In justifying such a step the Report argues that "the Soviet Union is increasingly annoyed at being left on the sidelines", and that it "has a considerable capacity for complicating or even for blocking" progress towards a settlement.

What has to be said here is that the Soviet Union will not be deterred from "complicating" or "blocking" a settlement simply because it is involved in the negotiation. It is even conceivable that its ability to complicate or block will be enhanced precisely because it is able to take part in the negotiation. The matter is by no means straightforward or clear-cut, and the risks either way are considerable. But instead of arguing the case, the Report is content to make sweeping but highly doubtful assertions.

Even more doubtful is the equally bare assertion that another Arab-Israeli war will provoke "a major confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union." Confrontation between the two super-powers results not so much from conflict between other states as from their own world-wide rivalry and their mutual suspicions. Specifically, if there is confrontation in the Middle East between the US and the USSR, this will arise not from an Arab-Israeli war, but from the desire of each superpower to secure advantages in an unstable but important region and, if possible, to deny these advantages to the other. An Arab-Israeli war could be the occasion of a confrontation—but so might a *coup d'état* in Iran or Saudi Arabia—or a quarrel between Iraq and its neighbours to the south.

FOR A DOCUMENT produced by a committee in which academics predominated, the Brookings Report seems flatly categorical and dogmatic in its analysis, and curiously reluctant to explore options, risks, and possibilities. If I have dealt with it in such detail, this is because its outlook and assumptions seem to have governed recent policies mooted by the US administration.

It is quite in keeping with the character of the Report that the recent Egyptian-Israeli negotiations initiated by President Sadat's visit to Jerusalem could not have been envisaged or allowed for in its scheme and that, as has been said, the administration which adopted its conclusions seems to have been surprised and taken aback by these developments. No one, of course, can tell whether these developments will lead to anything; but it was always on the cards that if any Arab state were to decide to settle with Israel on its own, this would have to be Egypt. It is the only state with the incentive and the ability to do so, and its quarrel with Israel can be settled with relative ease. That such a possibility should not have been explored either in the Report or, apparently, by the Carter administration is very significant. But whatever the fate of Sadat's initiative, it will have had the advantage for the US administration—whether it knows this or not—of extricating it from a futile and damaging line of policy.

IT IS USUALLY (AND RIGHTLY) SAID that the academic's virtues—his critical turn of mind, and his willingness to follow the argument wherever it leads—become defects in the man of action who must accustom himself to take quick decisions on the basis of hunches and imperfect information. But in a region like the Middle East where yesterday's friend can become today's opponent, where alliances and allegiances shimmer and dissolve like the *fata morgana*, the academic's scepticism, his readiness to scrutinise far-fetched theories and unlikely suppositions—qualities not to be found in the Brookings Report or in the policies to which it gave birth—are perhaps qualities that even busy men of action should cultivate.

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Martin Stokes

The Orders for the Massacres of Glencoe

1. To Captain Robert Campbell of Glenlyon

You are hereby ordered to fall upon
the rebels, the MacDonalds of Glencoe,
and put all to sword under seventy.
I say you are to have a special care
that the old fox and his sons do upon
no account at all escape your hands.
You are to secure all the avenues
that no man escapes.

This you are to put
into execution at five o'clock
precisely; and by that time or very
shortly after it, I will strive to be
at you with a stronger party; if I
do not come to you on the five, you are
not to tarry for me but to fall on.

This is by the good King's special command,
for the good and safety of the country,
that miscreants be cut off root and branch.
See that this be put in execution
without feud or favour, or else you may
expect to be dealt with as one not true
to King nor Government, nor a man fit
to have commission in the King's service.

Thus expecting that you will not fail
in the fulfilling hereof, as you so
yourself love, I subscribe thee with my hand
at Balicholis, February 12, 1692.

R. DUNCANSON

2. To the Sassenachs

Now look, I'm telling you to belt along
the lanes, the lands, the customs of Glencoe
and put all to fright over seventy.
You will make sure the old, their farms, their sons,
their daughters, the scenes, the shops do upon
no account escape your wheels and boots.
You must tear up each track and path and place
so that nothing escapes, and ghouls shall gaze.

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You are to start all this at eight a.m.
on each fine summer day, and soon, by one,
or very shortly after it, busloads
will drive to be with you with a stronger
party; if they do not meet you at one,
you are not to go out but stay indoors.

By the Scottish Tourist Board's command,
for the fame and livelihood of Glencoe,
these innocents will not have house nor home.
See that this is carried out with friends
and without favour or else you will
be dealt with as poor sassenachs not true
to us nor Grand Glencoe, nor a man fit
to have his own vehicle in his own name.

Knowing that you will do as we command,
as you love Glencoe but not the folk,
I subscribe you with my hand and from my heart
at Edinburgh, February 12, 1962.

ALAN D. TOODEAR

George Szirtes

The Village Politicians

(after Wilkie)

Their heads are too big for a start. Their bodies
Shrink to pup-like cowering, all hunched.
Gestures are means of voiding the bowels; air reeks
In the small room where they are bunched

Around the table in endless argument.
A frenzy grips them surely! Faces fall
To ape Michelangelo's Damnation, a small boy
Steals the dog's dinner, woodlice crawl

Out of the rotting beams, and a carving knife
Lies on the floor among the debaters who
Are growing angry. The fireplace is threatened
By encroaching darkness. Time fixes them like glue

In these painful attitudes. What suffering
Has brought them here together to this inn?
Is this the end of something hateful
Or does a new era of viciousness now begin?

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BOOKS & WRITERS

As Time Goes By

On Film History & Criticism—By PHILIP FRENCH

TWENTY YEARS AGO the British Film Institute's library was easily contained in a rather generous boxroom. Ten years ago it occupied a space little larger than my own sitting-room. Now it has moved into handsomely appointed and spacious premises designed to house a collection of books the vast majority of which have been published during the past decade. As if fulfilling some Parkinsonian law the literature of the cinema has flourished in inverse ratio to the decline of the industry that inspires it. At a rough estimate, about 80% of film books published before 1965 were in French, Italian, Russian and other continental languages; since 1965 80% have been in English. In 1946 only two major institutions of higher education in America offered courses in the cinema, in Britain none. The situation was not radically altered until the 1960s when an extraordinarily rapid expansion took place, at least in the United States, although the market demand for film-makers remains pretty limited and vacancies for film critics are about as numerous as openings for harness-salesmen. Whether the cinema is a satisfactory subject for full-time university study is a matter open to debate; just how it should be taught is also far from settled.

Two consequences of this burgeoning of cinematic studies were not anticipated by its pioneering advocates, though in hindsight they seem inevitable. The first is the rehabilitation of Hollywood and its elevation to a position of artistic, social and cultural centrality to which only in their headiest moments had its own denizens aspired. This was necessary partly to supply a vast area of respectable material on which researchers could feed and courses be based and partly because the majority of American students were unwilling or unable to undertake the preparatory work that would enable them to understand a Swedish, Japanese or Italian movie, if not in its original language at least in its specific cultural context. The second is that, to a greater degree than in any other subject in the area roughly defined as liberal arts, there has been a new demand for theories of a scientific and ideological nature to dignify and validate film as a proper academic pursuit.

In 1944 W. H. Auden wrote a letter to the editor of *Nation* in praise of James Agee's film criticism. "One foresees the day", he concluded, "when Agee on films will be the subject of a Ph.D. thesis." Auden was both right and wrong. It took fifteen years and the death of Agee before his movie pieces were collected, and another five for *Agee on Film* to be published in Britain. Agee received his due recognition and the book continues to be read, but while several graduate students have no doubt written dissertations on him, his influence is not now widely felt in the world of academic film studies. Would that it were.

WHAT AGEE LACKED was a theory, a methodology and an ideology. He went into the cinema armed only with his faculties of perception, his taste, judgment and accumulated experience. Well, that is of course not entirely true—he had been a practising Christian and had flirted with Marxism. But he was not equipped with the kind of method that "can help shape thoughts into more than that kind of bourgeois subjectivism where the sheer intelligence of the writer becomes the only criterion of value." They're the words of Bill Nichols in the introduction to his heavyweight anthology of theoretical writing,[1] the bulk of it produced over the past dozen years. This is the most coherently organised collection of its kind, containing texts on semiology, Marxism and structuralism, as well as on the genre, *auteur* and *mise-en-scène* approaches which initially helped open up Hollywood to systematic study. In this latter section is one of the few specialised pieces that would commend themselves to a general reader—Andrew Sarris's introduction to his *American Cinema* and Nichols is some-

[1] *Movies and Methods.* Edited by BILL NICHOLS. University of California Press, $20, £16; paper $7.95, £5.50.

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what apologetic about including it as he regards Sarris as a critic rather than a theorist.

One of Nichols' chief sources, more than incidentally, is *Screen*, a journal with a minuscule circulation and enormous influence. Published by the Society for Education in Film and Television, under the benign aegis of the British Film Institute, it has been the principal conduit for the introduction into the English-speaking world of the theoretical and ideological preoccupations of French criticism since the late 1960s. Starting out as an earnest, left-wing Leavisite journal, it became increasingly devoted to creating a theory combining Marxism, structuralism and semiology, and later the neo-Freudianism of Lacan. The magazine has a captive audience within the world of film teaching and came to play a significant part in shaping the Edinburgh Festival. But its opaque style of writing and dogmatism repelled and confused those not forced to read it, and eventually to their credit several important contributors came to express in the journal itself the severest misgivings about the way their own manner of address had frustrated their aims. Like many contributors to Nichols' book, the *Screen* people erected a barbed wire of jargon, technical terminology and neologisms around their work to exclude strangers from the arcana.

Nichols is himself a determined theorist, and in a final piece sets out to "take serious issue" with many of the premises of Metz, Wollen, Eco and the *Cahiers du Cinéma* editors (one of whom, Jean-Louis Comolli, he consistently calls Jean-Luc). But as editor his tone is that of a tailor fitting out clients with the latest fashions or a gunsmith seeing that his customer has a stock, trigger and ammunition suited to this season's sport.

The book's main value is as a guide to the current intellectual climate. But theory is neither essential nor always useful, and in some cases can be positively harmful. For instance a very able critic of my acquaintance was so persuaded that Peter Wollen's semiological study *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema* (1968) was the shape of things to come and that such complex critical strategies were beyond him that he gave up writing. In vain did I urge him to look at Wollen's own career and compare the clotted impenetrability of his pieces for *Screen* with the lucid essays on American directors such as Budd Boetticher and Sam Fuller that Wollen had earlier contributed to *New Left Review* under the pseudonym Lee Russell. Another example of a gifted critic damaged by Marxism and continental theory is Colin McArthur, who used to write so engagingly for *Tribune* under the *nom de plume* Chuck Kusick. Now, under his own name

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in the same paper, he writes aggressive polemics against "bourgeois critics", reiterates the duties of the Marxist, discusses new methodologies, and, like a bowler forever running up to the wicket without delivering the ball, scarcely ever reaches the point of reviewing an actual film.

WHETHER MARXISM WOULD HAVE HAD a permanently deleterious effect upon Harry Alan Potamkin is hard to say, because like a surprising number of the best movie critics (Agee, André Bazin, Robert Warshow, Otis Ferguson, Richard Winnington) he died young—in 1933 at the age of thirty-three. Maybe it would have been no longer lasting than the allegiance of such contemporaries as Lionel Trilling and Edmund Wilson, though his involvement was greater, stopping just short of actual party membership. At least, in an obituary notice W. E. B. Dubois said that because "Potamkin upheld the Communist views on film and literature and had been a secretary of the John Reed Club in New York at the time of his death, he was the first non-Party member to be given a Red funeral."

The son of a Russian immigrant fish-peddler, Potamkin switched from poet to movie critic under the influence of the French writers he met during a visit to Paris in 1927, and from a formalist to a Marxist in 1929. Lewis Jacobs' exemplary edition of his work[2] confirms what occasional anthology pieces and the claims of his contemporaries have led one to suspect—that Potamkin in a mere six years created the first major body of critical work on the cinema in America. He ranged widely and thought deeply, and was hammering out his own critical vocabulary in the process of understanding the cinema. He needed no borrowed jargon to reveal his insights. The way he caught the international cinema on the wing at a crucial period still impresses and his theoretical discussions were sufficiently open to encompass aspects of the prophetic. In 1929 for instance he wrote:

> On May 26th 1928, there appeared in *Billboard* an article by me on "Radio entertainment", which said: "Television is the speech-sight medium. The movie is the art of silent visual plastic fluidity. Speech is a monstrosity in the movie . . . television is the sight medium that stresses speech." I wish to modify this. The present cinema, known as the *movie*, is the art of silent visual plastic fluidity.... If speech may not be stylised for the cinema utterance may. . . . The objection to sound cannot be absolute. It can only be an objection to the compounding of it with a form intrinsically silent....

Potamkin, like most members of his generation, execrated Hollywood for its venality, its crass commercialism and its corrupting effect upon European talent—he blames the moguls for the premature death of Mauritz Stiller and for turning his protégée Greta Garbo into "a golden trademark." On the other hand, looking across the Atlantic, he rather touchingly wishes that after *Un Chien Andalou* "Señor Buñuel might be allowed to turn his gifts to more ambitious, less treacherous, introverted ventures, in his own land." Potamkin's last piece of writing was a posthumously published "Proposal for a School of the Motion Picture" to be established at a major university. It was way ahead of its time, and some of his proposals, such as that all students should learn German, French and Russian, sound even more revolutionary now than they did then.

THOSE INCLINED TO AGREE with the late Barnett Newman that "aesthetics is for the artist the way ornithology is for the birds", will be both encouraged and discouraged by James Monaco's excellent study of the five major directors of the French New Wave, Truffaut, Godard, Rohmer, Rivette and Chabrol.[3] Monaco amusingly presents their first meeting at the Cinemathèque Française, now nearly thirty years ago, as if he were scripting a Warner Brothers biopic, and shows the way in which their reading of popular American cinema combined with current French literary and cultural theory (Lévi-Strauss, Barthes, Parain) to produce their own distinctive brand of cinema.

Their films and their writings served first of all to excite a new enthusiasm for the cinema among younger American filmgoers in the early 1960s, and this initial liberation was followed by two further effects. One was to introduce into Hollywood a new creative vitality (the revived British cinema played an almost equal part in this, as did the relaxation of censorship the European imports forced upon the Motion Picture Producers Association of America under its dynamic new president Jack Valenti). The other was to help provide a necessary new respectability for a total reassessment of Hollywood's past. If Truffaut thought Hitchcock a genius, if Godard believed that Samuel Fuller was a great artist, and if the whole group agreed that Don Siegel's B-feature *Baby Face Nelson* was a *chef d'oeuvre*, then some stuffy, and perhaps treacherous, cultural arbiters had been concealing from young Americans the artistic

[2] *The Compound Cinema: The Film Writings of Harry Alan Potamkin.* Selected, arranged and introduced by LEWIS JACOBS. Teachers College Press, $25, £17.

[3] *The New Wave: Truffaut, Godard, Chabrol, Rohmer, Rivette.* By JAMES MONACO. Oxford University Press, $15.95, £10.25; paper $3.96, £2.50.

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birthright that was buried here in their own backyard.

Without an understanding of the cultural and intellectual background to the New Wave it is impossible to understand the historical role they played or the divergent paths each of the five took. On the other hand in the course of what strikes me as too sympathetic an account of Godard's recent films, Monaco disarmingly remarks:

> This method of thought-as-art is probably more familiar and more comfortable for French observers of Godard accustomed as they are to the theoretical psychedelics of Althusser, Metz, and Lacan, than it is for Anglo-Saxons. There is a validity to this method, then, if there is also a strong criticism to be made of it.

The debt I've suggested the American cinema owes to the New Wave is the subject for a major work that might be called *The Hollywood Renaissance* though it would be very unlike the book of that name by Diane Jacobs,[4] a Columbia University film graduate and, like almost everyone in America under thirty, so her dust-jacket tells us, "presently at work on a screen-play."

Ms Jacobs is, one fancies, better acquainted with the Thesaurus than the dictionary: at one point she writes, with more perception than she recognises, that there is perhaps "no such animus as the New Hollywood", and a few pages later comments of a movie shot in the notoriously rainy Vancouver that the cameraman caught the quality of the "pluvious raw outdoors." Like numerous fellow countrymen she unwisely attempts to ape the highly personal, argument-ative vernacular tone of Pauline Kael without appreciating what Ms Kael has gone through to forge that style and earn the right to use it. She scatters cultural references as from an aerosol container, and while an intelligence lurks in the background she does very little to place the five directors of her choice (Altman, Cassavetes, Coppola, Mazursky and Scorsese) in any adequate social framework or to justify her contention that 1970 was the beginning of her renaissance. Moreover she sees American achieve-ments with that new cultural insularity that current film studies have helped create. At one point she lists Julie Christie among the "dis-coveries or re-discoveries" of Robert Altman, though how anyone could have thought Miss Christie lost in 1971 after the string of pictures she appeared in from *Darling* to *The Go-Between* is rather a puzzle.

[4] *Hollywood Renaissance*. By DIANE JACOBS. Tantivy Press, £6.50; A. S. Barnes, $12.

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THIS SOMEWHAT GRUDGING ATTITUDE to foreign movies, and especially to British ones, is another of the less salutary legacies of the estimable Ms Kael, whose mild anglophobia is perhaps a healthy corrective to the ardent anglophilia of most other *New Yorker* writers, and who appears to believe that there is something in the English sensibility (and possibly in the British air as well) that is inimical to successful movie-making. One encounters it in a book by another American movie academic, Donald Spoto, "whose course on Hitchcock enjoys a special popularity" at the New School in New York according to the dustjacket of his book on Hitchcock.[5] As if he were a pioneer aviator Spoto further boasts of having "logged 1,300 hours at Hitchcock's films" and no doubt could pilot us through *Psycho* in a fog-enveloped drive-in cinema. But he remains too close to the films, and while forever making preposterously large claims for the Master's transcendent greatness, never comes up with that whole view of the man's *oeuvre* offered by Claude Chabrol and Eric Rohmer in their trail-blazing book of 1958 (with which he is evidently not acquainted) or by Robin Wood in his 1965 monograph, the first book on Hitchcock in English.

Dr Spoto is constantly making illogical qualifications such as "It is not entirely a failure (as it would have been if directed by someone else)", but the claim I referred to earlier is made in his section on *Shadow of a Doubt*. "Hitchcock seems to me", he says, "the quintessentially *American* film-maker, far more closely in touch with the country's literary and philosophical roots than Howard Hawks, Raoul Walsh or John Huston." Now this is the most arrant nonsense. Not only does it indicate a failure to understand what Hitchcock found in America and what he needed it for, it also ignores what so close a scrutiny by an American should have revealed—namely the significant role that Britain and British attitudes have continued to play in Hitchcock's American work.

Spoto doesn't seem to have noticed that nearly all the American films (the major exception is *Psycho*) have used British actors in roles calling for a special kind of menace or authority. The villains include, for instance, Otto Kruger in *Saboteur,* Claude Rains in *Notorious,* James Mason in *North By North West;* the establishment is represented by Leo Carroll as a Senator in *Strangers on a Train* and a CIA boss in *North By North West;* his chosen voice of doom in *The Birds* is the British character actress Ethel Griffies, and for his most recent picture, *Family Plot,* he brought over another elderly British actress, Cathleen Nesbitt, to play the rich old Californian upper-class matriarch.

IF HITCHCOCK REMAINS in thrall to Britain and its class system, so did this country's other major gift to Hollywood (and the only other director whose face is instantly recognisable to people the world over)—Charlie Chaplin. And indeed this is the theme of a persuasive study of Chaplin's early career by two British movie historians, Raoul Sobel and David Francis.[6]

Like Hitchcock, Chaplin's character and outlook on life were shaped by his lower-middle-class London childhood at the turn of the century, and its values, ethos, and tastes suffused his work. His tramp, they argue, was not a working-class figure but a lower-middle-class one, and reflected his creator's sense of insecurity and fear of ridicule. They're a trifle hard on their evasive subject, at times they seem to treat him as their quarry, almost as if they had a brief on behalf of his neglected collaborators and unacknowledged sources. But they establish more convincingly than any previous writers that the key source of Chaplin's art was in the English music hall and especially in Fred Karno's company. More comic routines, they claim, came from his memory than from his imagination, including such famous jokes as the shack teetering on the cliff-edge, the cooked boot and the bread-roll dance in *The Gold Rush.* After his initial burst of energy, over sixty movies in the three years 1914–17, he slackened off, his failing powers of invention (or depleted repertoire) being accompanied by a immense increase in the seriousness with which he took himself.

Chaplin was at his best when he set out to do no more than entertain; Hitchcock too is best appreciated as a pure entertainer. This does not mean that a point of view, a philosophy even, may not be contained in their work, merely that it is best embodied in their apparently lighter exercises. Sobel and Francis see this, Spoto doesn't, and it leads him to elevate the flaccid 1937 movie *Young and Innocent* over the enduring masterpiece, *The Lady Vanishes,* that followed it, because the earlier film contains "major visual metaphors" that point forward to his American films. *The Lady Vanishes,* perhaps the most flawless comedy thriller ever realised, is dismissed as "a perfect cinematic soufflé—meant to be savoured, not analysed."

[5] *The Art of Alfred Hitchcock: Fifty Years of his Motion Pictures.* By DONALD SPOTO. W. H. Allen, £7.50.

[6] *Chaplin: Genesis of a Clown.* By RAOUL SOBEL and DAVID FRANCIS. Quartet Books, £5.95, paper £2.95.

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AN ACTOR WHO HAS never suffered the fate of Hitchcock in being taken too seriously, or of Chaplin, in taking himself too seriously, is Douglas Fairbanks Sr, though over the years his career has been subjected to some interesting scrutiny, starting during his life, but mostly building upon the seminal essay *Douglas Fairbanks, The Making of a Screen Character* that Alistair Cooke wrote to accompany the Museum of Modern Art's tribute to Fairbanks in 1940, the year after the star's death. The latest in a string of books is the work of two film teachers from the University of Kansas[7] and contains some valuable if rather poorly reproduced pictures.

First as an athletic go-getter in contemporary social comedies, then as a swashbuckling tongue-in-cheek adventurer in costume movies, Fairbanks set a new style in heroism, and became in his life and work a democratic aristocrat, a prince chosen by the people. He was also, as a pioneer user of colour and a founder with Chaplin, Griffith and Mary Pickford of the United Artists corporation (through which for the silent era at least he was able to exert total control over his own movies), a major industrial innovator. The career that petered out so dismally in the 1930s is ultimately a sad one, the story of someone who remained at heart a child (his latest biographers invoke Peter Pan), but his movies still retain their capacity to grip through their hero's humour, grace and athleticism. His style dates far less than that of his contemporaries. But when one says he didn't take himself seriously, this doesn't mean that his art was unimportant to him. On the contrary he was a fastidious craftsman who would no doubt have concurred with Jeffrey Richards' claim for the swashbuckling movie:

> at its best it is an exhilarating excursion into pure style, a heady blend of male beauty and agility, the grace and colour of historical costume, the opulence and splendour of period sets and the spell-binding legerdemain of horseback chases, chandelier-swinging and dazzling swordplay.

Richards' *Swordsmen of the Screen*[8] is a celebration of a genre that most of its practitioners despised or felt ashamed of (Basil Rathbone for example, the greatest of swashbuckling villains, ignores these roles in his autobiography); the major exception was Douglas Fairbanks, the

[7] *His Majesty the American: The Films of Douglas Fairbanks Sr.* By JOHN C. TIBBETTS and JAMES M. WELSH. Thomas Yoseloff, £9.95; A. S. Barnes, $17.50.

[8] *Swordsmen of the Screen.* By JEFFREY RICHARDS. Routledge & Kegan Paul, £8.95.

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only important star who dedicated himself to it. Tracing the swashbuckling movie from its roots in literature and 19th-century theatre up to its recent one-man revival in the hands of Dick Lester, Richards has written an admirable piece of genre history, though it must be said that general readers will inevitably find it less interesting than his earlier book about the cinema's handling of imperialism, populism and Nazism, *Visions of Yesterday*. One valuable incidental point is that Richards has established at last the exact provenance of a line misquoted almost as often as Ingrid Bergman's "Play it, Sam." Tony Curtis did not say "Yondah lies da castle of my foddah" while impersonating an English knight in some Arthurian romp. What he did say in that thick Brooklyn accent (this was before he perfected the aristocratic Cary Grant voice used while seducing Marilyn Monroe in *Some Like It Hot*) was "Yondah lies de palace of my foddah de sheikh", as Kashma Baba in a Universal Studios epic, *Son of Ali Baba,* back in 1952.

DARK DREAMS BY CHARLES DERRY[9] lies at the other end of the spectrum from Richards' book and is rather typical of the unnecessary works that film studies are encouraging. Carrying on its dust-jacket the subtitle "The Horror film from *Psycho* to *Jaws*" and on the inside the sub-title "A Psychological History of the Modern Horror Film", the book contains about enough substance for a lively term paper. Derry divides horror films into three categories—those concerned with human madness, those centering on some external threat (whether from bombs, birds, or spacemen), and those involving some form of demonic possession. But having done this he merely proceeds to take us through the plots, identifying recurrent motifs (or as he would say "iconic symbology") and making some fairly obvious social connections. The difference between his book and Richards' is, quality of mind apart, primarily a reflection of their different backgrounds. Derry appears to have spent his life in cinemas (he saw *Psycho* at the age of nine) and recently took his MA in film at the University of California. Richards read history at Cambridge and is Lecturer in Byzantine History at the University of Lancaster.

This paucity of historical perspective and simple historical knowledge is to be found in most current American film writing. There is for instance a demand for readable, well-researched histories of the major studios, but Bosley Crowther's history of MGM, *The Lion's Share,* remains after twenty years the only such book worth recommending to civilised readers. What we get instead are coffee-table books, up-market fan magazine stuff with titles like *The RKO Gals* and *The Paramount Pretties,* and the curious works of latter-day antiquarians like I. G. Edmunds' plodding, folksy narrative history of Universal from its origins in the days of the Patents Wars in 1910 up to the coming of sound.[10] An afterword of a single page takes us from the Thirties, when founder Carl Laemmle was kicked out, to the present, which finds the once despised Universal cock-of-the-walk. "Surely if Uncle Carl—wherever his spirit may be—can see his old studio today, he must be saying, 'I told you so!' ", concludes Edmonds all too characteristically. There's little here to reflect the bitterness Potamkin expressed about Laemmle and Universal, or the goings-on at the studio mediated in thinly disguised form through one of the first novels of any consequence to be written about Hollywood, Carroll and Garrett Graham's *Queer People* of 1930.

HISTORY IS NOT precisely the strongest suit of Richard Koszarski, who has assembled two volumes of reflections on their craft[11] that Hollywood directors contributed to contemporary magazines from before the first World War (Edwin S. Porter writing for *Motion Picture World* in 1914 about his "18 years in the motion picture business"!) up to 1976 (Michael Ritchie on the making of *Smile*). Each article is prefaced by a knowing placement of its author that reflects a whole body of opinions and system of judgment that didn't exist before the early 1960s. What these confident judgments demonstrate is the extent to which the once contentious views of the younger French *auteur* critics—as codified, expanded and embellished by Andrew Sarris, first in a special number of the New York avant-garde quarterly *Film Culture* (Spring 1963), then in his book *American Cinema: Directors and Directions* —have now become a settled orthodoxy. They are accepted almost without question as though they had always existed, and only a few even remember the time when Sarris descended from the mountain bearing his controversial tablets.

The material assembled by Koszarski is of considerable interest in the way it shows a shift from directors theorising and pontificating about films in a stiff, frequently patronising fashion in

[9] *Dark Dreams.* By CHARLES DERRY. Thomas Yoseloff, £8.50; A. S. Barnes, $15.

[10] *Big U: Universal in the Silent Days.* By I. G. EDMONDS. Thomas Yoseloff, £7.95; A. S. Barnes, $15.

[11] *Hollywood Directors* 1914–1940. Edited by RICHARD KOSZARSKI. Oxford University Press, $13.95, £9.50; paper $3.95, £2.50. *Hollywood Directors* 1941–1976. Edited by RICHARD KOSZARSKI. Oxford University Press, $15, £8; paper $4.95, £2.95.

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the first volume to their post-war obsession with the nuts and bolts of making pictures that dominates the second. The editor expresses himself surprised at how few touch on matters of politics, and can only come up with an embarrassing piece contributed to *New Masses* during the war by Robert Rossen before he became disillusioned with Communism. Had Koszarski collected similar pieces by writers rather than directors, he could have filled a book with articles like Rossen's.

In presenting the Rossen piece he seems to have forgotten the article he included in his first volume by Frank Tuttle. This hard-hitting, stylistically vulgar piece about Hollywood going to war against Hitler and Mussolini, published in 1939, refers to the Motion Picture Guild's programme of anti-fascist pictures to be directed by Herbert Biberman and written by John Wexley (misspelt as Wesley). In his editorial note Koszarski reviews the blandness of Tuttle's directorial output and asks:

> What are we to make, then, of the burning idealism and naive expectations for world betterment that we see in this article? Hardly the words of a worn-out studio drudge.

Well, what we are to make of it is that Tuttle was an active member of the Communist Party, professionally among the best established in Hollywood, and he is here exhaling official doctrine in the then conventional form of patriotic address. Tuttle had left the Party by 1946 and later appeared before HUAC as a friendly witness. There is of course a strong connection between the kind of pictures he made and the rhetoric of the piece reprinted here, and it would have been interesting to know what was thought of it just a few weeks after publication when the Nazi-Soviet pact was signed.

No one can be sure how much of the material in *Hollywood Directors* is ghosted and how much really the work of the men themselves. (Or "people themselves"—three women get into the first volume, one into the second.) There's a coherent piece by Michael Curtiz on which it would be amusing to have an opinion from Peter Ustinov, who found while working under his direction that Curtiz had forgotten his native Hungarian without managing to learn English and lived in a strange linguistic limbo from which he despatched cryptic messages to mystified collaborators. For the most part now, directors have given up writing, preferring to subject themselves to the occasionally searching, usually bland, questioning of *cinéastes* with tape-recorders. A typical ramble of this kind is the book that Gerald Pratley has assembled from his

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fourteen hours of taped conversations with John Huston.[12] The more confused the film, the more interesting the accounts of it (as *Picture*, Lillian Ross's classic report on the shooting of Huston's *The Red Badge of Courage*, demonstrated), and the best couple of pages here concern Jean-Paul Sartre's unsuccessful efforts to provide Huston with a workable screenplay for *Freud*. The first draft ran to 400 pages, the "shortened" revised version to 600. But what impressed Huston most was Sartre's attitude to press criticism. The reviews of his new play arrived by post in Ireland three days after the opening night. Sartre set them aside and didn't bother to look at them until his morning's work with Huston on the *Freud* script was over.

ALTOGETHER SOUNDER as history than most books on Hollywood, and a rare case of a serious study of the cinema that deserves to reach a wider public, is Thomas Cripps' scrupulously researched study of Blacks in American movies from the turn of the century to the US entry into World War II.[13] It is a sad and instructive story of patronisation and humiliation for actors in Hollywood (there was of course no work there for writers, artists or technicians) and bitter frustration in the parallel semi-underground cinema that produced special fare for black audiences.

This latter aspect of the book, concerned with the making of black Westerns, musicals and gangster movies, is the most revealing and least known. Unlike black literature and theatre it was almost wholly unpoliticised, but unfortunately no one made much attempt to do more than imitate Hollywood with singing black cowboys and black millionaires in cut price productions that the ghetto audiences almost invariably rejected. As most of the films were made by white producers and largely by white technical crews, no tradition of Negro film-making was established.

Cripps leads up to the 1942 declaration by the film industry and the NAACP (engineered by the recently defeated Republican presidential candidate Wendell Willkie) that in the words of a Variety headline promised "Better Breaks for Negroes in Hollywood." That a radical transformation was needed in Hollywood attitudes towards social and ethnic stereotypes before the

[12] *The Cinema of John Huston*. By GERALD PRATLEY. Tantivy Press, £6; A. S. Barnes, $12.
[13] *Slow Fade to Black: The Negro in American Film 1900–1942*. By THOMAS CRIPPS. Oxford University Press, $19.95, £13; paper $5.95, £3.95.

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Negro's status in the industry could be changed, and that this would follow not precede some radical shifts in society, was not then apparent to those taking part in the discussions. But changes did come, very slowly at first, though the last three wars have each been accompanied by, and been the cause of, singular advancement for Blacks which has been reflected in the current cinema. I must say that I had never fully appreciated the significance for the Black community of Dooley Wilson's role in *Casablanca*. This 1942 Bogart vehicle is now a cult film and has given rise to a phrase that has entered the language. But I shall never hear Sam playing "As Time Goes By" again without thinking of what it must have meant at the time for Black audiences to see a Negro being given a pivotal function in the plot, accorded full equality with the greatest stars in Hollywood, and his race never being made an issue.

A New Theatrical Orthodoxy

Plays & Playwrights—By RONALD HAYMAN

ONE PASSAGE IN JOHN ARDEN'S new book[1] is far more moving than he intends. It was in 1967 that he entered decisively into a working partnership with his wife, Margaretta D'Arcy, whose instincts as a dramatist, he writes,

> have tended to operate in the reverse order to mine. She will think of a *subject* that requires to be dramatised: and will relate it to the conditions of the time and the potential audience to be sought for it. Only then will the idea of a story to embody the theme, and a style to narrate the story, become uppermost in her mind.

In his early plays (three of which have reappeared in the first volume of a collected edition[2]) he started with a story and let the style evolve, drawing deeply enough on the ballad tradition for the influence to permeate his language, narrative and construction. The most ballad-like sequence in *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance* (produced 1959) is the one in which the barmaid, who has been bereaved of her soldier-lover, offers herself to three soldiers, each in turn rejecting her. In *Armstrong's Last Goodnight* (produced 1964) another bereaved girl is conceived like a ballad character and speaks ballad language. The poetic texture of the dialogue is extraordinarily rich and, as in Shakespeare, a powerful sense of locale is generated by words and actions which need no visual help from the set. Density of woodland is suggested by density of language, bleakness of hills by stony words. As a man dies, pinned against a tree by the spears of his enemies, their leader's farewell is "He will remain here on this fellside for the better nourishment of the corbies. Ride."

To Present the Pretence would be a more revealing book if it had incorporated the best of the essays Arden wrote before he became a doctrinaire Marxist. In a piece called "Telling a True Tale" (published during 1960 in *Encore*) he argued that unless social criticism is "expressed within the framework of the traditional poetic truths", it "tends in the theatre to be dangerously ephemeral and therefore is disappointing after the fall of the curtain." Set in 1879, *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance* originated out of an incident in Cyprus during the 1950s, and *Armstrong's Last Goodnight*, which is set in the 1520s, was partly inspired by Conor Cruise O'Brien's book *To Katanga and Back*. Both plays largely succeed in the objective he formulated in the same essay: "translating the concrete life of today into terms of poetry that shall at the one time both illustrate that life and set it within the historical and legendary tradition of our culture." The passage in his book about his wife's instincts indicates a touching unawareness of how much he has sacrificed by handcuffing the poet and the story-teller to the propagandist. *The Non-Stop Connolly Show*,[3] a cycle of six plays about the Irish revolutionary who was shot by the British after the Easter Rising of 1916, is full of bad verse, melodramatic situations featuring villainous bailiffs, and crude symbolism with capitalistic imperialism represented by a character called Grabitall.

[1] *To Present the Pretence: Essays on the Theatre and Its Public*. By JOHN ARDEN. Eyre Methuen, £5.50, paper £3.25.

[2] *Plays: One. Serjeant Musgrave's Dance, The Workhouse Donkey, Armstrong's Last Goodnight*. By JOHN ARDEN. Eyre Methuen, £1.25.

[3] *The Non-Stop Connolly Show*. By MARGARETTA D'ARCY and JOHN ARDEN. Pluto Plays, Parts 1 and 2, £1.50; Part 3, £2 (available at £1 each to members of the Pluto Playscript Club, Unit 10, Spencer Court, 7 Chalcot Road, NW1 8LH).

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ACCORDING TO TONY COULT, author of a booklet about Edward Bond's plays,[4]

> His achievement has been to create theatre which is Marxist in that his characters are the products of social processes, whose motivations and actions find their energy in social relationships.

In most of Bond's plays, as in many plays by Marxists, characterisation is wrecked against a rocky determination to illustrate social, economic and political processes through individual behaviour. Although dramatists have evolved a large repertoire of techniques by which a character can be made to represent a type, group, class or nation, drama tends to insist on single combat as a means of settling disputes, and the better a confrontation is, the more it individualises the combatants (Oedipus versus Creon, Coriolanus versus Aufidius). Brecht's Puntila is no more a typical employer than his Matti is a typical chauffeur. The employer stereotype of Marxist drama may be no worse than the servant stereotype of drawing-room comedy, but both are bad.

Bond's *Bingo* (produced 1973) and *The Fool* (produced 1975) are not really about Shakespeare and John Clare but about social injustice. Neither writer is convincingly characterised, nor is his writing in any way illuminated. Overestimating Bond's importance as a Socialist sage, rather in the way that he overestimates it himself, Tony Coult is uncritical of the bad writing in his recent work. Bond's most incisive dialogue is still to be found in *Saved* (produced 1965) and *Narrow Road to the Deep North* (produced 1968). Of the three plays reprinted in Eyre Methuen's Master Playwrights series,[5] *The Pope's Wedding* (produced 1962) and *Saved* both centre on the private behaviour of extraordinarily private individuals. *The Pope's Wedding* is about a boy who sacrifices his marriage in the process of trying to establish a relationship with a hermit; the powerfully underwritten *Saved* centres on a boy who stubbornly goes on living in the same house as a girl who has lost interest in him and whose parents are no longer on speaking terms. Even in the scenes between lovers, the words make their impact by drawing attention to what remains unspoken. Much of the overwriting in *Early Morning* (produced 1968) and the later plays comes from loading identity too heavily with social and political significance. The Lesbian relationship between Queen Victoria and Florence Nightingale in *Early Morning* would have been much funnier if Victoria were not such a top-heavy symbol of imperialistic paternalism.

VERY LITTLE HAS BEEN WRITTEN about political theatre, and it is disappointing that the issue of *Gambit*[6] devoted to the subject does so little towards clarifying it. Thirty pages are wasted on transcribing a boringly discursive discussion, while John Calder's editorial sidesteps the problem of definition by asking "if there is such a thing as non-political theatre" and pointing out that *Waiting for Godot* has been considered dangerously political in Communist countries. This is like trying to argue that the men hauled in front of the Committee for Un-American Activities must have been non-American. If we want a definition, we could do worse than base it on Kenneth Tynan's contention that "There is today hardly an aspect of human suffering (outside the realm of medicine) for which politics, psychiatry and environmental psychology cannot offer at least a *tentative* solution." This is obviously untrue, but most political drama rests on belief in social reorganisation as a panacea, while Beckett's plays, like most of Ionesco's, assume that the main sources of suffering are inherent in the human condition.

Ionesco's position is strongly anti-political. His play *Rhinoceros* expressed the terror he had felt during the '30s at seeing his intellectual friends, one by one, jettison ideological independence to climb on the back of the Nazi juggernaut. Nor would he hesitate in applying the word *rhinoceritis* to the new Marxist conformism, were it not that the rhinoceros is a solitary animal. As he said in an interview reprinted in his collection of articles and polemical essays *Antidotes*,[7] "My rhinoceroses are sheep that go rabid."

The new *trahison de clercs* has blighted the rich crop of emergent writing talent in the English theatre. Of the fourteen playwrights discussed in *The New British Drama* by Oleg Kerensky[8] five are grouped under the heading "Politics, mild and bitter"—David Hare, Trevor Griffiths, Howard Brenton, Howard Barker and Stephen Poliakoff—while Edward Bond and David Storey are classed as "Outsiders." Kerensky quotes from an interview in which Trevor Griffiths (whose television plays[9] have been published almost simultaneously with his

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[4] *The Plays of Edward Bond.* By TONY COULT. Eyre Methuen, £1.95.

[5] *Plays: One. Saved, Early Morning, The Pope's Wedding.* By EDWARD BOND. Eyre Methuen, £1.25.

[6] *Gambit.* Volume 8, Number 31. John Calder, £1.25.

[7] *Antidotes.* By EUGENE IONESCO. Gallimard, 49 Fr.

[8] *The New British Drama: Fourteen Playwrights since Osborne and Pinter.* By OLEG KERENSKY. Hamish Hamilton, £6.95.

[9] *All Good Men* and *Absolute Beginners.* By TREVOR GRIFFITHS. Faber, £1.95. *Through the Night* and *Such Impossibilities.* By TREVOR GRIFFITHS. Faber, £1.95.

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translation of *The Cherry Orchard*)[10] said that if he thought he could do more to change Britain by working "on the streets or in the political parties", he would give up writing for the theatre. I don't know whether David Hare, Howard Brenton, Howard Barker or David Edgar would say the same, but like John Arden in his later work, they all tend to subordinate artistic values to activist expediency.

When they were writing one-act plays for Portable Theatre, David Hare and Howard Brenton could not have been accused of stylelessness. Their style may have been anti-literary and anti-theatrical, determined by shock tactics calculated to arouse and to hold the attention of an audience not in a theatre-going habit, but at least it was distinctive. In the full-length plays they have written with bigger theatres and London audiences in mind, Hare and Brenton have both subordinated manner so completely to matter that none of their recent work would be recognisable as theirs if it were performed anonymously. Hare's *Fanshen* (produced 1975)[11] is a clever, Brechtian dramatisation of William Hinton's book about the Chinese revolution, using nine actors to play 30-odd parts. Brenton's *Epsom Downs*[12] (produced 1977), which was also written for the Joint Stock Company, uses nine actors to play about 50 parts, including male nude talking horses, in an exuberant frothing, Frith-like evocation of Derby Day.

BOTH PLAYS ARE MUCH LESS aggressive than their early work, but Howard Barker is still hitting as hard as he was in his first plays. In an interview with Oleg Kerensky he says that his work is "not naturalistic because I think naturalism has run its course, become exhausted and corrupted." But his story-telling technique is straightforward, and his only deviations from naturalism are comparable to those of Victorian melodrama and television thrillers. Characters tend to be either unrealistically virtuous or totally corrupt, while violence boils entertainingly beyond the rim of credibility, like milk in a saucepan. In *Claw* (produced 1975) Noel Biledew makes a bad beginning to his career as a pimp, offering a schoolgirl to a policeman who buys her for a pound but retrieves his money by punching the boy in the stomach. He learns from his mistake, and becomes very successful, pimping for the Home Secretary until he presses

[10] *The Cherry Orchard.* By ANTON CHEKHOV. In a new English version by TREVOR GRIFFITHS. Pluto Plays, £1.50.
[11] *Fanshen.* By DAVID HARE. Faber, £1.75.
[12] *Epsom Downs.* By HOWARD BRENTON. Eyre Methuen, £3.95, paper, £1.75.

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his luck too hard and his omnipotent client decides that he must be eliminated in one of the psychiatric institutions which the British government staffs with ex-hangmen and ex-terrorists so that social misfits can be rubbed out before they bring discredit on the Establishment. Or was it only under the Tories that this happened?

In *Stripwell*,[13] which was produced later the same year, the old survivor of the first Labour government has no warmth or idealism left in him. It is characteristic of Barker (as it was of the Marquis de Sade) that a criminal should be used to incarnate the integrity that is lacking in the judge. But in *Stripwell* the thug is wisely kept offstage throughout the central action. The writing is less heavy-handed than in *Claw*, and there is more ambivalence towards the characters. Mustering the courage to leave his wife for a go-go dancer, the judge seems almost likable until he informs on his son, telling the police that the boy is smuggling drugs in elephants' vaginas.

That Good Between Us,[14] which was produced last year by the RSC at the Warehouse, presents an alarmist picture of a future Britain in which democracy is only vestigial, as the government gets its way by using its army like the Nazi SS. To prevent the head of the secret service from seeming too diabolical, Barker makes him dote on his paraplegic daughter. Flying a kite for her on Wimbledon Common, he trips over the dead body of a soldier, and he makes out that he knows nothing about how the man died, evading the girl's questions until the corpse starts to answer them. "They tied me to a chair. Poured petrol up my nostrils. Twisted combs in my hair. . . . I have never known such pain." One of Barker's most sympathetic characters is the right-mindedly Left-Wing daughter of the Home Secretary. But she falls implausibly in love with a boy whose only ambition is to win stardom as a government spy and who urinates into a milk bottle to save the trouble of walking to the lavatory.

David Edgar's *Wreckers*[15] (produced in 1977 by the 7:84 Company) is cruder—both in its aggressiveness and in its construction—than his *Destiny* (which was staged by the RSC at the Aldwych) though again great energy has obviously gone into the preliminary research. Set in 1972, the first half of the play makes a moral comparison between unpunished malpractice in the rag trade and the violation of the Industrial Relations Act by five dockers, who go to prison for it. The second half questions the relationship between law-breaking and immorality by involving the same characters in an extremist bid to take over a constituency Labour Party and by revealing the moderate MP as having no genuine belief in moderation.

IN BOTH *Destiny* and *Wreckers* there are brief sequences in which characters talk directly to the audience, but none of these playwrights is seriously concerned with stylistic experiment, partly because the prime concern is activist, partly because this implies a need to reach the widest possible audience. The formal conservatism of the young British radicals is shamingly exposed by the Eyre Methuen volume containing plays by two Austrian writers, Wolfgang Bauer and Peter Handke, and two Germans, Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Franz Xaver Kroetz.[16] Though their concerns are more social and political than ontological, all four can all be described as experimental writers.

Handke is the most important of them, and this play of his, *My Foot My Tutor* (produced 1969) is one of his most unusual, consisting entirely of stage directions. Though it lasts more than an hour, not a word is spoken. With his distrust of language and his strongly reductive instincts, Handke proves that action can be sustained and tension developed in silence. Both characters are masked, which depersonalises the developing relationship between them, as the older man tries to assert his authority against the mounting resistance of the younger. That action and posture could be theatrically effective was no new discovery, but it was a revelation that a writer could choreograph such an extended action with so much precision, creating something that is neither a mime nor a musicless ballet but essentially a play.

Martin Esslin, who, together with his wife, translated Bauer's *Shakespeare the Sadist*, has edited a new theatrical encyclopaedia,[17] which tells us that Bauer "uses his experiences of Happenings and improvisation exercises to create a form of highly theatrical and grotesquely realistic well-made play, characterised by biting wit and the exact and concise use of Austrian dialect." The encyclopaedia is based on *Friedrichs Theaterlexikon* by Karl Gröning and Werner Kliess, which was published in Hanover in 1969. Though Esslin has updated it, he fails to mention either Fassbinder or Kroetz, who have emerged during the '70s.

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[13] *Stripwell* and *Claw*. By HOWARD BARKER. John Calder, £6.50, paper £3.25.

[14] Printed in the same issue of *Gambit*.

[15] *Wreckers*. By DAVID EDGAR. Eyre Methuen, £1.

[16] *Shakespeare the Sadist*. By WOLFGANG BAUER. *Bremen Coffee*. By RAINER WERNER FASSBINDER. *My Foot My Tutor*. By PETER HANDKE. *Stallerhof*. By FRANZ XAVER KROETZ. Eyre Methuen, £3.95, paper £1.50.

[17] *Illustrated Encyclopaedia of World Theatre*. Edited with an Introduction by MARTIN ESSLIN. Thames and Hudson, £12.50.

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Fassbinder's *Bremen Coffee*, which concertinas ten murders and a suicide into an hour of playing time, becomes less macabre and more comic as the action proceeds. The writing is reminiscent of Georg Grosz: exaggeration does not detract from grim authenticity in this brutal portrayal of bourgeois brutality. The plays of Kroetz, who worked as an actor in Fassbinder's Munich *anti-theater*, have an affinity with Edward Bond's early work: the inarticulacy of the characters in *Stallerhof* (produced 1971) makes it impossible for them to find out what their problems are, let alone help each other to solve them. Emulating the graceless baldness of journalese, the play presents four introverts on an isolated farm, where the farmer's retarded daughter is impregnated by a labourer who habitually masturbates on the lavatory. The play ends on a note of guarded optimism as the farmer's wife, armed with a hosepipe and a bucket of soapy water, is about to force the metal nozzle into the girl, who is lying naked on the kitchen table. Changing her mind, the woman uses the soapy water to clean the floor.

THE DEARTH OF EXPERIMENTAL playwrights in the English theatre is not complemented by a dearth of experimental directors, though the best of them, Peter Brook, prefers to work in other countries. John Heilpern's *Conference of the Birds*[18] is a disappointingly gossipy account of the expedition in 1972–3 to Africa, where the group of actors who had been working with Brook in Paris improvised performances in the towns and villages. Brook's premise was based on Artaud's belief in the possibility of creating an alternative natural language of sounds and movements that would break through linguistic and cultural barriers. It is tantalising to be told so much about trivialities, and so little about the effect on the African performances of all the preparatory exercises and improvisations done under studio conditions in Paris.

One of the great unsolved problems of theatre is how to include the audience in the excitement and the collective creativity of studio work and rehearsal. Performance must consist of repetition, and in so far as the actor is an artist, he cannot help being more interested in developing a performance than in repeating it. During the run of the Artaud-based *Theatre of Cruelty* at the LAMDA Theatre in 1964, directed by Peter Brook and Charles Marowitz, the programme varied from night to night and part of it was improvised. Half of Charles Marowitz's book

[18] *Conference of the Birds: The Story of Peter Brook in Africa*. By JOHN HEILPERN. Faber, £5.95.

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The Act of Being[19] consists of four appendices, and the most interesting of the four is an account of the *Theatre of Cruelty* season, giving details of the exercises and improvisations, while the main body of the book is most interesting when it describes exercises Marowitz has devised for his actors. But he tells us neither how the exercises have influenced the final performance nor how the actors have influenced the exercises. In fact the book tends to confirm what I have often felt from watching his productions—that he imposes too much on actors for them to contribute as creatively as they could.

[19] *The Act of Being*. By CHARLES MAROWITZ. Secker & Warburg, £6.50.

Of all the things wrong with the English theatre, nothing matters more than that the situation is now so unconducive to experiment. We pride ourselves on the quantity of new playwrights who have emerged, without asking ourselves how much is genuinely new about their work. And if the Arts Council is consciously pursuing a policy of discouraging experiment while subsidising agitprop, it has done well to deprive the Royal Court and the Open Space of their subsidies. That they have both been going through infertile periods does not mean that they have outlived their usefulness or that there are plenty of other theatres in London where an experimental writer might get his work produced.

Of Horrors & Scapegoats

Ending World War I Legends—By CORRELLI BARNETT

IN 1975 AN AMERICAN SCHOLAR, Professor Paul Fussell, published a highly praised work on the trench literature of the Great War entitled *The Great War and Modern Memory*. It would have been better named *The Western Front and British Memory*, because it concentrates almost exclusively on the writings of a few British soldier-poets or soldier-novelists who served in France and Belgium, and its horizon is limited largely to Britain and the British, if not to the Royal Welch Fusiliers.

Paul Fussell's book displays scant awareness that the British experience on the Western Front formed only a part, and by no means the most important part, of a struggle involving several theatres of war and two great alliances. What of Britain's French ally? What of the German enemy, who may be thought to have played some role in the British experience? Professor Fussell has little to say about them. But in this narrowness of horizon Professor Fussell reflects only too faithfully both the limitations of the trench-writers themselves and of the British folk-memory of the Great War. Moreover his historical introduction, which provides the framework for the literary criticism that follows, equally remains faithful to the cliché picture of the Great War first promulgated by the war-writers themselves and then hammered home by such interested pens as those of Lloyd George, General J. F. C. Fuller, Captain Basil Liddell Hart and assorted anti-war propagandists of the 1930s—the cliché picture vividly presented in the musical *Oh What a Lovely War*, and still produced at will by virtually any member of the intellectual middle classes today when occasion serves.

In this received view the war itself was "futile", the British military leadership was composed of callous blunderers, the offensives were unnecessary; all our young men died round Ypres; life in the trenches, let alone the actual battles, constituted a uniquely horrible experience. That an intelligent and critical man like Paul Fussell, writing 60 years after the event and some 50 years after the main spate of trench reminiscences, can trot out these platitudes yet again demonstrates the lasting power of the war-writers' testimony.

Yet in a recent lecture at the University of East Anglia Professor Fussell himself blew a mine under the basic assumptions of *The Great War and Modern Memory*. His current research into the imagery used by the trench-writers had shown, he informed his audience, that it largely derived from imagery favoured in English literature over several centuries. The war-writers' picture of the Western Front experience was consequently a highly *literary* interpretation; reality refracted through traditional literary modes of feeling and expression. It was therefore unsafe to accept their writings as "factual" evidence about the reactions of the majority of the British Army to the trenches and the battles. Professor Fussell from the point of view of literary critic thus advances much the same argument as I put forward as an historian in *The Collapse of British Power* (1972): that the war-writers were an unrepresentative group, and that

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therefore their best-selling books of the period circa 1928–33 have bequeathed a false and misleading impression of the Great War to the British folk-memory.

But why has this misleading version been so readily clutched at as the "truth" about the War? It may be that the explanation lies in this: by inviting the luxury of emotionalising over the "futility" and the horrors of mud and blood, and of venting moral indignation against the chosen scapegoats of the "high command", it saves unwilling minds the intellectual pain of confronting the *fact* of the Great War; the fact of the war as a predicament from which there was no practicable escape but through victory or defeat; and, furthermore, a predicament into which Britain had been ineluctably drawn by the course of world events between 1890 and 1914.

TWO IMPORTANT NEW BOOKS, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War* by Zara S. Steiner[1] and *The Road to Passchendaele: The Flanders Offensive 1917; A Study in Inevitability* by John Terraine,[2] explore this fundamental question of British involvement in the European power struggle, and the continuing predicament facing British leaders in peace and war. Together they illuminate Clausewitz's dictum that war is a continuation of state policy by other means.

In Zara Steiner's book we see Great Britain, centre of a world empire, gradually forced by circumstance to recollect that she was nevertheless primarily and inescapably a European state, and that, just as in earlier centuries, the European balance of power must be her first concern. We are made to understand why and how all but a small minority among politicians and public became convinced that Imperial Germany was mounting a double challenge both to the balance of power and to British maritime supremacy, and that this challenge must be resisted; how as a result Britain became gradually more and more committed between 1906 and 1914 to intervening on a Western Front alongside France if war should come.

In John Terraine's book we see the consequences of these apparently unavoidable developments—a mass British army in Flanders with the role of aiding the French to evict the German invader from France and Belgium. We see the continuing influence on British policy of the German naval threat, now in the form of unrestricted submarine warfare. We see the

[1] *Britain and the Origins of the First World War*. By ZARA S. STEINER. Macmillan, £7.95.

[2] *The Road to Passchendaele: The Flanders Offensive 1917; A Study in Inevitability*. By JOHN TERRAINE. Leo Cooper, £11.50.

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relations between France and Britain in wartime subject to mutual suspicions and antagonisms all too similar to those of the pre-war era. We see the same basic factor that had dominated pre-war foreign policy also governing wartime inter-allied discussions of strategy—the overweening power and ambition of Germany. We see, finally, how Britain came to fight the offensive which clinched the image of the Great War in the national folk-memory—the Third Battle of Ypres in 1917, popularly known as "Passchendaele" after the last objective taken. And we emerge with a fresh understanding of the real predicament facing politicians and generals alike, the complexity of the problems and pressures with which they had to grapple, and of the limitations placed by circumstance on their freedom of decision.

Zara Steiner's *Britain and the Origins of the First World War* forms an addition to the series *The Making of the Twentieth Century*, directed at the needs of university students. Within a short compass of 257 pages of text the author seeks to cover not only the ins-and-outs of world diplomatic and strategic rivalries between 1890 and 1914, but also the currents of British opinion, the nature of the principal British political forces of the era, the inner workings of the Cabinet system and the great departments of state, a strategic analysis of Britain's world position, and the crucial factor underlying all others, that of Britain's declining relative industrial capability. With less sureness of touch she also summarises the reform of the British army under Haldane.

Although it is admirable that Mrs Steiner should attempt to link together such diverse threads rather than write a narrow traditional Cabinet-and-Foreign-Office account, she has not entirely solved the problem of compression which she has set herself. Such a problem may either be tackled by ruthlessly finding space for the centrally important events and issues at the expense of other information, or by trying to get everything in by sheer condensing. Mrs Steiner veers between the two solutions, for part of her book consists of a potted history of events, and part of analysis of broad questions. The potted history, dealing as it does with a period replete with diplomatic complication, sometimes reads rather like one of those mind-boggling programme synopses of the plot of an opera, while some of the passing references to persons or happenings are so cursory as to be puzzling to the uninformed reader. Mrs Steiner is at her best when discussing the major underlying issues and factors: the ideological cross-currents of Gladstonian moralism and internationalism and of social-Darwinism and muscular jingoism; the romantic celebration of war as a detergent of a corrupt civilisation; the immunity of the Foreign Office "establishment" from party or popular pressure, and of the Liberal Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, from Cabinet domination.

BRITAIN AND THE ORIGINS OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR persuades afresh that there really was no practicable alternative policy before 1914 to that of aligning Britain with France against Germany, and, likewise, that such a policy carried inevitably in its train a commitment (avowed or not) to intervene in a Continental campaign alongside the French army in the event of war. As Mrs Steiner convincingly argues, British foreign policy, unlike German, was not the product of domestic pressures but of external factors; Britain's involvement in the international power-struggle was reluctant, defensive. Nor had Britain any wish to make an enemy of Imperial Germany. In the late 1890s, after all, she made strenuous efforts to secure a German alliance, in order that Germany might countervail the then apparent Russian threat to the British Empire in the East. The attempt failed because the interests of the two countries were neither common nor complementary. Germany had no wish to fight Russia in order to defend British interests in the East, while Britain would not commit herself to taking Germany's side against France and her ally Russia if Germany found herself in a war of her own in Europe.

A German alliance therefore proving impossible, could Britain have remained in a state of splendid isolation from the European power struggle, as the radicals in the Liberal and Labour parties urged? Sir Edward Grey, the Liberal foreign secretary from 1906 onwards, and the overwhelming majority of the British public believed not, on the grounds that Imperial Germany was a militaristic, irresponsible and expansionist power which aimed at the domination of Europe and the destruction of British command of the sea. Modern scholarship, especially German, has confirmed that this British diagnosis at the time was, even if highly coloured, essentially accurate. The radicals' alternative policy of holding aloof from European alliances and commitments must have opened the way for the achievement of a German hegemony over Europe, with all that this would have implied for the security and independence of the United Kingdom. Indeed, when the radical alternative of neutralism *was* later adopted by the National Government in the 1930s, the consequences proved disastrous, and by March 1939 the logic of events, the realities of power, forced a return to a Greyite policy at the last moment and in the least advantageous circumstances.

It was as a result of aggressive German diplomacy aimed at France during the first

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Moroccan crisis in 1906 that the Anglo-French *entente* began its transformation into an unavowed alliance which was drawn tighter down the years by ever more specific understandings about Anglo-French military cooperation in the event of war. In 1911 the staffs of the two countries agreed in detail on contingency plans for the deployment of the British Expeditionary Force without delay on the left wing of the French army; the genesis of the Western Front. The naval understanding of 1912 whereby Britain undertook to protect France's northern coastline completed the British commitment to the French, even though Grey claimed to the last that since Britain has signed no formal alliance with France, she remained free to decide whether to go to war or not. One senses, however, a pull in Mrs Steiner's mind between acceptance that the military commitment to France was right and inevitable in the circumstances and the view still common among intellectuals today that it was a mistake, being contrary to "the traditional British way of warfare."

This "traditional way" Mrs Steiner sees in Liddell-Hartian terms as one of maritime warfare and minor land campaigns, preferably outside Europe. But in fact, as Paul Kennedy argues in his recent *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery* and as I argue in *Britain and Her Army*, this "blue-water strategy" has never constituted the British way of warfare, even though it has proved a seductive myth from the days of the first Elizabeth up to 1937, when Neville Chamberlain and his colleagues decided that the British Army's role in the next war would be to fight a colonial campaign in the Middle East while France was left to take on the German Army alone (a decision reversed in spring 1939). The reading of British wars must be that, no matter how profoundly the nation might desire to keep out of protracted land warfare on the Continent, it has always in the event proved impossible to do so. In the case of the British commitment to fighting alongside the French army in 1914, the margin between defeat and victory in the Marne campaign proved so narrow that the absence of the British Expeditionary Force would almost certainly have resulted in a German triumph, with all that that would have implied for the history of Europe and the world.

Those underlying factors which determined Britain's eventual entry into the Great War as an ally of France thereafter governed the evolution of her wartime strategy. The need to support France, indeed preserve her from collapse, dictated that the major British effort must be made on the Western Front. The grossly annexationist peace terms sketched by Germany during the peace feelers of 1916–17 dictated that a

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compromise peace was out of the question, and that the war must be fought to a finish. And that in turn meant that the German army must be beaten in the field—as in the Second World War the Allied victory only followed the German Army's defeat at the hands of the Red Army, belatedly aided by the Anglo-American Normandy invasion. However, while before 1914 the radicals had wished to evade the necessity of joining a diplomatic front against Imperial Germany, so leading war-time politicians, and in particular Lloyd George, War Premier from December 1916 onwards, wished to evade the necessity of fighting the German Army. Hence Lloyd George's preferred strategy for 1917 was to divert plenty of guns from the Western Front to aid the Italians in their offensives against the Austrians. As he told the War Cabinet in June 1917 (and quotes in his own War Memoirs): "If the Germans came to the assistance of the Austrians, then you would be fighting them and wearing them out. . . ." In his memoirs Lloyd George does not, however, quote his next sentence, which John Terraine has retrieved for us from the Cabinet minutes: "But this would take place at the expense of the Italians and not of our men. . . ." And while the pre-war Liberal government, in its ignorance of military matters, had left the soldiers to draft the plans which effectively bound Britain to France and a Western Front, so the no less strategically uninstructed civilians of Lloyd George's War Cabinet, reluctant though they might be, came in the end to give their blessing to the strategy advocated in 1917 by Sir Douglas Haig, the British Commander-in-Chief in France and Belgium, and Sir William Robertson, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

IT IS THIS CONTINUITY of themes and factors from peace into war which offers one of the fascinations, but by no means the only one, of John Terraine's outstanding and original contribution to the history of the Great War, *The Road to Passchendaele*. Whereas Mrs Steiner seeks to cover a long period by a highly condensed narrative, John Terraine subjects one campaign and its genesis to a close-focus examination, and does so by means of a dossier of documentary extracts linked by a brief and neutral editorial commentary. He has culled his material from the now open War Cabinet records, private papers and diaries, military correspondence, the verbatim records of inter-Allied conferences, meteorological and other operational reports. The extracts have been chosen with the discernment that comes from profound study of the subject, and the author has skilfully grouped them in order to

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illustrate the five main threads that, tightly interwoven as they were, went, in his words, "to compose the pattern of 1917, the darkest year of the War." These threads were, firstly, Flanders itself and its strategic importance; command changes and their disruptive effects; the relations between soldiers and politicians; the German submarine menace, "the invisible enemy"; and lastly the weather, or "the invincible enemy."

The book falls into two main sections, the first dealing with how and why the Third Ypres offensive came to be launched, and the second with how and why the battle took the course it did. The strategic importance of Flanders had been apparent to British soldiers and some politicians such as Churchill since late in 1914, when the idea of a major British offensive there first took shape. An advance as far as the Dutch frontier would bring about a collapse of the whole German right wing in the West and the capture of the U-boat bases on the Belgian coast, while the layout of German communications behind the German front rendered them vulnerable even to a relatively limited British success. Moreover, an offensive in Flanders would at the same time protect the British Army's own communications, base area and supply ports. For all these reasons Haig had wished to make the major British effort in Flanders ever since he became C-in-C in December 1915. But in 1916 he had been constrained to fall in with French plans (France still then being the senior partner in the alliance) for an offensive on the Somme. By the beginning of 1917 the original arguments in favour of attacking in Flanders had been buttressed by another—the fast rising rate of merchant-ship losses at the hands of the U-boat. During the spring months of 1917 the Admiralty was to urge ever more insistently that the Belgian U-boat bases must be captured.

Nevertheless, Haig again had to defer his Flanders project, because the Anglo-French summit at Chantilly in November 1916 had agreed on a renewed joint offensive on the Somme in February 1917. Then came the first of the command changes which upset and delayed allied planning. In December 1916 Marshal Joffre, the French C-in-C, was replaced by General Nivelle. Nivelle had a new plan: the French army would win the war by a lightning breakthrough on the Aisne, followed by a rapid advance through the collapsed German front. Although Haig agreed to support this offensive by attacking at Arras, he nevertheless ordered preliminary planning to commence for his Flanders project, in case Nivelle failed. Because of these changes in command and plans, the allies eventually attacked in April instead of February, a major loss of time. When Nivelle

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failed to achieve his promised breakthrough, he in turn was replaced in May by General Pétain, so causing further paralysing uncertainties and delays.

MEANWHILE THE WHOLE grand-strategic picture had been transformed by the Russian Revolution in March and America's entry into the war in April. Was Russia now finished as an ally—or would she find renewed vigour under her new social democrat government? Would not a British offensive in the West at least encourage her to stay in the War? As for the United States, would it be best for France and Britain to sit tight until the arrival of the American army next year? Or was there a real danger that the anti-German coalition would fall apart from discouragement in the meantime unless the British Army engaged the enemy in a major offensive? In any case the Admiralty flatly pronounced that Britain would be brought to her knees by the U-boat before the advent of 1918.

Late in May a fresh factor intruded: widespread mutinies in the French army along the Aisne front which continued sporadically until July. However, as John Terraine's documentation shows, the French successfully concealed the true state of their army from British soldiers and politicians alike, merely conveying that it was temporarily in a poor state of morale. If Haig launched his offensive, could he depend on Pétain's categorical promises of support, or not? Here was another profound uncertainty to add to the others in the grand-strategic debate that took place between British service and civilian leaders in June and July 1917. As Sir William Robertson said later, and John Terraine's documents demonstrate, "A correct decision was not so easy to make at the time as it appears now."

The author's quotations from the Cabinet records prove that Lloyd George's own account of this debate in his memoirs (which takes the form of a purple-prose indictment of Haig and Robertson, coupled with a disclaimer of any responsibility of his own for the Ypres offensive) is seriously inaccurate. In particular Lloyd George makes the charge that he and his Cabinet colleagues were not informed of plans and preparations for the offensive until June. In fact they first approved the concept in outline back in January, while Haig personally expounded his strategy to the War Cabinet in March and Smuts, a member of the Cabinet, advocated the offensive in a paper on future strategy at the end of April.

In any case, the protracted arguments of June and July 1917 were bedevilled by another factor—the gulf of mutual mistrust and incomprehension that divided the politicians from their military

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advisers. The civilians were ignorant of strategy and the complexities of modern large-scale military operations; the soldiers could not comprehend the political pressures bearing upon the civilian leadership. Yet this gulf had become immeasurably widened since January 1917, when at an allied summit at Calais Lloyd George attempted by trickery and surprise to place Haig and the British army under strict subordination to the French C-in-C, and hence to the French government. Haig and Robertson now entertained a bitter mistrust of Lloyd George as a man. What should have been a frank and open debate on strategy therefore became a confrontation. Because of this, as John Terraine's extracts demonstrate, Robertson supported Haig without qualification even though he considered Haig's belief that Germany stood on the verge of disintegration to be much exaggerated.

Nevertheless, the Cabinet record shows that the Third Ypres offensive was in the end formally approved by the War Cabinet, which, as the supreme constitutional authority, must therefore carry full responsibility for it. Lloyd George's later diatribes against Haig and the battle in his memoirs thus rebound on himself.

WITH HINDSIGHT WE KNOW that the Third Battle of Ypres failed to achieve the objectives laid down by Haig beforehand. During the battle itself, however, there existed reasonable grounds for hoping that further efforts would bring about the enemy's collapse; how reasonable is shown by the German evidence cited by the author that at times the enemy was desperately hard-pressed to keep his front intact. It was this hope of finally clinching a partial success that drew Haig on to Passchendaele. Nevertheless, the offensive laboured under two related handicaps which may have made the difference between ultimate success and failure; a start some two months late because of the delays and disruptions in allied planning, and an August that was one of the wettest in Flanders on record, so stalling the battle at the outset. Although September was fine, the rains came again in October, and the battle ended in mid-November with the armies floundering in a swamp. John Terraine's documentary material demonstrates, however, that these gruesome conditions affected the German Army materially and morally as much as the British, a fact sometimes lost sight of by the trench-poets and Haig's critics; and demonstrates too that, contrary to hoary legend, Haig and his staff were well aware of conditions at the front.

Since Third Ypres failed to achieve Haig's stated objectives, must it be accounted "futile"? Or did the British Army, by engaging the enemy

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in a great and protracted battle, give the French the opportunity to recuperate from near-collapse, thereby saving the alliance? The contemporary evidence in *The Road to Passchendaele* provides no certain answer. Moreover, we can only speculate as to the possible results of adopting Lloyd George's preferred alternative strategy of inaction on the Western Front coupled with peripheral offensives against Germany's allies.

In the end we have to make up our own minds —if they be not already closed. But at least, after reading John Terraine's compilation of evidence, we will do so realising that the Great War constitutes a profoundly complex predicament not to be explained by simple tales of horrors and scapegoats.

Two Old English Riddles

John Barleycorn

Some acres of this middle-earth
are handsomely attired with the hardest, sharpest
most bitter of man's fine belongings;
it is cut, threshed, couched, kilned,
mashed, strained, sparged, yeasted,
covered, racked, and carried far
to the doors of men. A quickening delight
lies in this treasure, lingers and lasts
for those men who, from experience, indulge
their inclinations and don't rail against them;
and then, after death, it begins to gab,
to gossip recklessly. Shrewd men
must think carefully what this creature is.

Storm on Land

Which man is so sharp and so quick-witted
as to guess who goads me on my journey
when I get up, angry, at times awesome;
when I roar loudly and rampage over the land,
sometimes causing havoc; when I burn houses
and ransack palaces? Smoke rises,
ashen over roofs. There is a din on earth
and men die violently when I shake the forest,
the flourishing trees, and fell timber—
I with my roof of water, driven far and wide
in pursuit of vengeance by the powers above;
I carry on my back what once covered
every man, body and soul submerged
together in the water. Say what conceals me
or what I, who bear this burden, am called.

Kevin Crossley-Holland

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EAST & WEST

"Victims of Yalta"

The Shock of a Secret

By Victor Nekrasov

THESE ARE events which I knew nothing about, which I discovered only after thirty years . . . thirty years. . . .

This is the first terrible thing. I had to come to the West to find out about the tragedy of Lienz, about thousands of Russians driven to their deaths with British and American rifle butts.

And then those rifle butts and bayonets—that is the second terrible thing. . . .

VICTOR NEKRASOV *was wounded in the Battle of Stalingrad where he commanded a Red Army battalion. After the war he published one of the most popular Russian novels, "In the Trenches of Stalingrad." He was for many years a leading figure on the Moscow literary scene, and served on the staff of "Novy Mir" in the memorable days of Alexander Tvardovsky's editorship. A travel journal (of Italy and the USA) was published in 1964. Cambridge University Press also has an English translation of his novel "Kira Georgievna" in print. In the 1970s he requested an exit visa from the USSR, and for the past two years has been living in Paris. His remarks on the repatriation horrors of 1945–47 were written after he had read Nicholas Bethell's "The Last Secret", and it is published as the "Postface" to the Russian edition of that book (Stenvalley Press, £5).*

The current storm of controversy, initiated by Count Nikolai Tolstoy's new book on this subject, "Victims of Yalta", is discussed in this issue of ENCOUNTER *in R's Column (pp.37-40); and from the sheaf of embittered and infuriated articles in the British press, outraged by the enormities of what Solzhenitsyn called "the last secret of World War II", we print the commentary by Peregrine Worsthorne (pp. 76-78).*

Let us face facts. In our eyes, as Soviet soldiers, the Vlasovite was the enemy. More than that, a traitor. We hated him and despised him worse than we did the German, the fascist. I myself never came across them in the war. There were none of their units in the places where I fought. But I suspect that if any had turned up among the thousands of German prisoners who passed through our dug-outs at Stalingrad, they would not have received a friendly welcome. A man in German uniform, with a German weapon, shooting at his own people—what can he be but the enemy?

Stalin took it a stage further. Any man taken prisoner—how or why does not matter—is a traitor to the Motherland, he commits treason. And when his own son was captured, he had no pity even for him.

A soldier can give himself up as a prisoner, or he can be taken prisoner. These are different things. Some of them indeed changed sides. Others were heroes. De Gaulle, Churchill and Tukhachevsky were prisoners in their time. But in the history of war the prisoner is seen as someone who suffers misfortune and, when he is freed, he is met with flowers and rejoicing. The prisoners taken at Port Arthur in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–5, when they returned from Japan, were greeted by joyful crowds in old St Petersburg—they marched up the Nevsky Prospekt like heroes. But the Soviet prisoner was beaten and thrown into a labour camp. In the West people cannot understand it. At the time even we did not really understand it, even though there was much that we had had to get used to.

But what about these people who took up rifles and shot at us, nearly a million of them? What does this mean? A million men—maybe more, maybe less, who counted?—making war against their own country?

Thus the question arises, what is a man's country? Is it the birch trees, the rivers, the sky, the songs? Or is it something more?

Perhaps we should invent another word instead of "Motherland." What name can you give to the the country where you were born, which you therefore love, but which has deceived you? It promised you everything—happiness, freedom, and work without slavery—but instead it closed your mouth and bound you hand and foot, both literally and figuratively.

The question arises—but only now, not then, there was no time for questions then—what were we defending when we fought the Germans? Our homes, families, and lives? Or the System? The truth is that we defended all four. By fighting Hitlerism and defeating it we strengthened this earth's other form of dictatorship, a form in many ways even more conscienceless and cruel. And we

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must bear our responsibility for this—we, the heroes and ordinary soldiers of the War that hoisted the Red Flag over the *Reichstag*.

So much for us. But what about them, Ivans and Sashas shooting across the line at other Ivans and Sashas? It is one of the most complicated and unexplained questions, or rather tragedies, of that War. A million men make war against their own people . . . the blood runs cold. . . .

WE MAKE MUCH of the figure "twenty million." Twenty million people laid down their lives "on the altar of the Fatherland" and of humanity. It is a terrible figure. But what does it prove? We remember the first days of *blitzkrieg*. It did not succeed, but those first days were *blitz* indeed. Everything was unprepared, the best generals liquidated, half our air force (maybe more) destroyed on the ground before it could take off, illiterates like Voroshilov and Budenny commanding whole armies and fronts. Was it the soldier's fault or the people's fault? Was it his fault if, with his 1891 rifle, maybe wounded, he fell into the enemy's hands? And then, behind the barbed wire, hungry and beaten, he asks himself the question: What was I trying to defend with this rifle I carried?

I will not try to make a judgment. I do not have the right. I was on the other side. But I will try to work something out. I picture a situation—a

—Crime on

THE *Second World War was Britain's finest hour. Ever since there has been national decline. Nobody can take much pride in what Britain is today. But at least we have a glorious past to hang on to. Perhaps not the entire past. After all, there were some blemishes, like the slave trade and the Irish famine, or Culloden and Amritsar. But surely the British record in the defeat of the monstrous Third Reich more than made up for them.*

For my middle-aged generation, at any rate, this has been a comforting assumption. It fell to us to play a part, however minuscule, in this country's last fine and noble contribution to the cause of freedom, civilisation, etc. That has remained a source of pride which can never dry up. Or so we thought, and continued to think even after all the revisionist historians had done their worst with such alleged crimes as the fire raid over Dresden, when thousands of women and children were burnt to death. That was war, horrible but just justifiable.

VERY RECENTLY, HOWEVER—*thanks to the rule making state papers accessible after 30 years—something new has come to light, and it is profoundly disturbing, since it took place after the war was won; took place, indeed, just at the very moment when the victorious Allies were setting up the Nuremberg Court to try German war criminals. Dame Rebecca West told the story in her review of Nikolai Tolstoy's monumental book about how the Western Allies, with Britain in the lead, forcibly sent millions of Russians back to the Soviet Union, where they were either done to death or despatched to the Gulag Archipelago.*

Some of them—those who had voluntarily fought for the Wehrmacht—may have deserved that fate. But many of them, like the Cossacks who had left Russia long before the war began, could not conceivably be regarded as coming within this category. And others, Russian women and children residing in Britain at the time, were clearly political refugees. Yet they too were deported.

No mercy was shown. The excuse, originally, was that this was necessary to make sure that Stalin sent us back our PoWs whom the Red Army had liberated. But long after all our prisoners had been repatriated, Britain still continued to send him his victims. Train and ship loads of Russians were forced back at the point of the bayonet, in spite of their pitiful pleas for mercy. Many committed suicide while still in our hands. Others were summarily executed, in front of British eyes, immediately on being handed over. The story is quite literally sickening.

YET HERE NOW, *in black and white for all to see, are the Foreign Office minutes coldly arguing in favour of the policy, discounting all humanitarian objections, recommending ways and means of keeping Parliament and public in the dark as to what was taking place, which was nothing less than a crime against humanity, not to be compared with Hitler's cold-blooded extermination of the Jews, but dismayingly similar in its utterly callous acceptance of mass murder.*

Perhaps it would have been better if this terrible episode had never come to light; if it had remained buried for ever in the official archives. Certainly Britain's national esteem, already at a low ebb, needs no further knocks. But it has come to light, unavoidably raising the question as to what, if anything, can or should be done. According to the Foreign Secretary, who has refused an official inquiry, there is no gain to be won by raking over the past; still less in trying to apportion blame. After all, Churchill and Eden, who were responsible for the policy, are now dead, and therefore cannot speak in their defence.

BUT MANY OF *the officials who painstakingly implemented the policy are still alive, basking in the official honours which subsequently came their*

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German prisoner-of-war camp, hunger, humiliation, thuggery, no Red Cross to defend you, and a future of almost certain death. So they tell you, "Put on that uniform you hate so much, get out and help us build roads, fortifications and bring up ammunition. . . ." That is what they say. The man next to you says No, and gets a bullet in the head. What choice do you have? So you go. You want to live. And maybe you'll find a chance of crossing the line.

I confess, I do not really believe that these men took up German arms to fight against Stalin alone. There were such people, but very few I think. Perhaps Vlasov himself was one; probably he was. But as for the ordinary prisoners, whose parents had been thrown off their land, who had put up with hunger, poverty and lies, what reason had they to break their backs in order to defend it all? So they tell you, "Build us roads, and fortifications." Then they give you a weapon and say, "Fight against Stalin—he put your family in prison." So you take the weapon and you say to yourself, "Maybe that's right, maybe it is all Stalin's fault. And no man except Hitler ever had the courage to go against him."

To sum up, who betrayed who? Did you betray your country, or did your country betray you? This is the question, and there is still no answer to it. There is no court of law capable of telling us who in the last resort is guilty. Guilty of what?

Britain's Conscience

way—Thomas Brimelow, now Lord Brimelow, who became head of the Foreign Office, Patrick Dean, now Sir Patrick, who became Ambassador to the U.S., Geoffrey Wilson, now Sir Geoffrey, who became head of the Race Relations Board, and is chairman of Oxfam.

Surely these distinguished gentlemen could be compelled to account for their actions. Presumably Sir Geoffrey, in particular, in the light of his subsequent record of humanitarian do-gooding, would have something illuminating to say about the morality of compulsorily deporting millions of people to certain death or starvation.

But the purpose of an inquiry would not be to point an accusatory finger at particular individuals, either living or dead, but rather to help us understand how it was that this country could sink so low; how high-principled statesmen and outstanding civil servants, at the culmination of a war fought in the defence of civilisation, could behave with such savage callousness while in the very act of claiming the moral right to condemn the enemy for not wholly dissimilar acts of barbarism.

THESE QUESTIONS *are not academic. They are perennially relevant, as the war in Vietnam, not to say Watergate, made all too clear. Even at this very moment our rulers here, Dr. Owen in particular—that latter-day Eden—are living with the self-same moral problems in relation, say, to Rhodesia, balancing reasons of State, of bureaucratic convenience, perhaps even party advantage, against the claims of humanity.*

Inevitably, these current debates are conducted in private, behind closed doors, with the public kept in the dark about the extent of their amorality. This is just as well, since the State could not maintain popular confidence for a moment if it told all. But when the truth does begin to leak out, as it occasionally does, then it is best for the disclosure to be total and shameless since only then can lessons be learned and morals drawn.

THE RUSSIAN DEPORTATION *affair is such an occasion. That our rulers erred grievously is already tragically clear. But what is not clear, and should be made clear is just why they did so: what were the reasons of State, of bureaucratic tidiness, of political advantage that seemed then to justify policies which today seem inexcusable?*

THERE *are not many ways in which contemporary Britain can set an example to the world. But a courageous willingness to expose her own past sins to rigorous examination, even involving a period previously so sacrosanct, would set such an example. But more important than that, it would serve as a salutary warning to the present generation of Ministers and civil servants as to how easy it is even for heroes to sink into iniquity. For it is not only the Nixons of this world, or the Hitlers, who so do, but also the Churchills and the Edens; not only the Erlichmans and Haldemans, but the Thomas Brimelows, and Patrick Deans and the Geoffrey Wilsons.*

More than enough has now emerged about the Russian deportations to stir the national conscience, and the matter can not be left as it is. If a new war crime on this scale had suddenly come to light in Germany, Britain would be the first to agitate for an inquiry; indeed, for much more than that. Only last week, the B.B.C. programme "Panorama" was complaining passionately that there were still war criminals alive and well there who had not yet been brought to book.

OUR GUILTY MEN *are not war criminals in that sense. But they were nevertheless responsible for something so terrible that it makes the blood run cold; and for a cover-up that has lasted for 30 years. My generation might have wished that it had lasted for ever, since it is unbearable to learn that the last few minutes of our finest hour were spent so shamefully. But if honour, at this late stage, can never be redeemed, at least dishonour can be squarely faced.*

Peregrine Worsthorne
in the *Sunday Telegraph (London)*

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Well, twenty million people are still twenty million. And we must not forget the other millions apart from those killed in the War.

WHO IS guilty? And guilty of what? The war criminals were put on trial at Nuremberg. The main ones, Hitler and Goebbels, committed suicide, and Goering too, after he had been tried. Others were hanged. Others have served their terms and are writing their memoirs. Rudolf Hess, sick and old, is still guarded by the victorious military authorities in the empty prison at Spandau. And his notes—he writes all the time—are still solemnly destroyed unread by the four commandants. A few others still hide out in Argentina and Uruguay. And there are others—I was such a child that I did not realise this—working in offices in East Germany, while their grandsons goose-step on parade near the Berlin Wall.

But what about the other criminals?

For instance, the one who signed the pact with Ribbentrop, the pact which stuck a knife into Poland's back at the height of her sufferings, which divided the Balkans, handed the German communists over to Hitler, and which ensured that right up to the last day—22 June 1941—trainloads of Soviet oil kept rolling to fuel German aircraft, to help them bomb our cities?

Molotov, the man who in 1939 told the Supreme Soviet and the world that no ideology, whether Nazi or fascist, should be opposed by force of arms; Molotov, the man who signed his name under Stalin's on Yakir's death warrant; Molotov, the man whose hands can never be washed clean of the blood of millions—this man spends his days walking up and down Gorky Street, visiting the Lenin Library, and at night, we can be sure, he sleeps, because his type does not suffer from insomnia. . . .

Molotov, Kaganovich, Malenkov, the other leaders, their faithful students and successors, whose unwrinkled portraits used to tower along the length of the GUM store in Red Square and in every town and village—where are they now, what are they doing and thinking? They have been forgiven. They live their lives out, go for walks along paths by their *dachas*, dig their gardens, even though they are forgotten and crossed out of the encyclopaedias. These people we forgive. They are, after all, "our" people, even though they used to destroy the population, calmly, coldly, not with rifles, just with the occasional stroke of the pen.

And those with rifles?

The new documentation on the Allied repatriation of 1945–47 which you have read is about these people—the ones who, armed or unarmed, fought against us, the Red Army.

I am not ashamed of once belonging to it. On the contrary, I am proud. The Red Army, after all, had to endure the War, whichever way it went, the beginning as well as the end, Stalin's betrayal and Zhukov's cruelty, with its unparalleled defeats and victories. They saw not only the German women their comrades had raped, but also the tears of joy of the liberated and conquered. Unfortunately, this is the way it is in war.

Then suddenly the war is over, the enemy smashed to dust. The victors celebrate, enjoy themselves, get drunk, embrace and fire their rifles into the air. The gates open; the prisoner-of-war camps empty; everything is confused and once again everyone is kissing, hugging and making merry.

I was not one of those who liberated or conquered Germany. I had finished my war. I was lying in hospital with a paralysed arm, or rather I spent those days strolling under the chestnuts and poplars near Kiev, puffing my pipe. But when I heard Levitan's voice on the radio and the victory salutes, I too drank and hugged my companions. We drank and embraced and we did not know; we knew nothing, neither in May nor in June nor in July of 1945. And for thirty years we did not know what was happening in that liberated and conquered land.

Thirty years . . . and suddenly we read. . . .

UP TO NOW I have spoken of things close to my heart, mysterious, incomprehensible, contradictory, perhaps even insoluble—where are we to find this crystal-clear, uncorrupt court of law, for instance?—but still part of my own experience. I will now try to look into something that is not part of me, into the hearts of strangers.

Into the heart of Anthony Eden, the heart of the private soldier in the London Irish Rifles or the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. . . .

At Yalta, before the end of the War, high-level negotiators decided that after victory all prisoners-of-war must be returned to their own countries. It seemed to make sense. At least it made sense to Westerners. But for those from the Soviet Union or, as they say here, those under Soviet rule, something more was understood than what was actually announced. For them returning home meant death, or at best a labour camp, both for the prisoners-of-war and for those who fought on the other side. No difference was made, or hardly any. In Stalin's view, every man who had been on the other side of the front line was an enemy, for he had seen too much, even those sent to forced labour in Germany. In farms and factories there they saw another life, not like ours. And we don't want that, do we? We'd better

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put them all behind bars. It's simple logic. They know too much. They might start gossiping, comparing. . . .

Such ideas could never have got through to Westerners, especially the military. Naturally, every prisoner-of-war would want to get home as soon as possible; forced labourers too; it's obvious. And as for those who fought on the other side, well, of course, they will have to be punished.

But when it came to the point, it was rather more complicated. The victorious soldiers were dealing with actual people. Part of the truth began to seep through to them. Not all at once, but gradually, little by little, making them understand an alien psychology and life.

For the government in London everything was more or less clear. Stalin demands, so we must do as he says, otherwise he may get angry, he may refuse to give back our prisoners from the East. There was a certain logic in this too, but. . . .

IT IS NOT EASY, I admit, to put oneself in the place of a British minister. Still, it is clear from Nicholas Bethell's book (and now from Count Tolstoy's)[1] that some of them understood that they were sending people to their deaths. Lord Selborne, for instance, the Minister of Economic Warfare, protested against his War Cabinet's decision to send Russians back by force. In his letters to Eden and Churchill he wrote that they were going to be shot, that their families would be arrested or deprived of rights. His heart was touched; so was Churchill's. Wise rogue that he was, hating Stalin but helping him nevertheless, he wrote to Eden, "I think these men were tried beyond their strength. . . ." (He was referring to those who, whether they had fought on the German side or not, knew what awaited them at home and were refusing to return.)

Anthony Eden knew what awaited them too. But his refined aristocratic heart was not touched in the least: "If these men don't go back to Russia, where are they to go? We don't want them here." Short and clear. He summed it up, "We cannot afford to be sentimental about this." So he wasn't sentimental. And he got his own way. On 4 September 1944, the British War Cabinet accepted Eden's proposal "after a short discussion." The fate of 3,750 Soviet prisoners-of-war—that's all there were at the time—and the fate of all the others freed at the end of the War was decided. They were driven off to their deaths. The Russians will never forget this. They will not forgive Eden. It was his document that killed them.

[1] Nicholas Bethell, *The Last Secret* (1974); Count Nikolai Tolstoy, *Victims of Yalta* (1978).

In 1945, the year of Victory, Europe is jammed with soldiers and others—the conquerors, the defeated, and the liberated—all being sent here and there. Nobody cares who wants what, who actually says, "I want to go home", or who declares, "Heaven forbid! Anywhere but!" Some drink and have fun; others hide; others fill their bellies for the first time in years; others loot on the sly. How to restore order?

So the round-up begins. Orders from Washington and London; all Russians into camps and then back to the Soviet Union, whether they want to or not. May, June, July. . . . The most horrible months . . . I won't repeat what happened. It's in the documentation.

LIENZ is not the happiest chapter in Britain's history. Some would call it a shameful chapter. Some would like to have done with it. But it won't disappear. It has to remain.

Let me try to get into the skin of a British soldier. Possibly, probably, he was disgusted at the sight of Russian Cossacks in German uniform, and he disapproved of what they did in the War. But, coming closer to them, he began to find reasons for their hatred. The part they had played in propping up the Tsars meant nothing to him. What the British "Tommy" saw now was

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people—old men, young men, their wives, mothers, and children. Some of the British had fought the Bolsheviks in 1920; others were told what happened in Russia during collectivisation; others had no time to discover any of this. Anyway, it emerged that all these old men, old women, and children would now have to be deceived. They would give them food and drink, smile at them, be very careful not to let a word slip, and then eventually, in spite of all that had gone before—brute force, bayonets, rifle butts.

I am told there is a provision in today's West German Army allowing a soldier to disobey an order that violates certain laws of humanity. In our Army there was no such provision. You heard the order—do it! No doubt it was the same in the British Army. However stupid, senseless, or inhuman the order—do it! So the "Tommy" carried out his orders. He was a soldier. He was ordered to use force and so he did. And later, many years later, he confessed that this was his worst moment of the war.

Alas, the elegant Lord Avon, Anthony Eden, confessed nothing. Even thirty years later, when he was asked about it, he could only say that he "really could not remember the details surrounding this matter." When he was sent a copy of his Cabinet Paper, he refused to comment on it. His heart stayed untouched, even after thirty years. And so he has departed, no doubt to the best of worlds, without a single pang of conscience.

But there were Englishmen of a different kind. . . .

The Lienz operation, the disposal of 20,000 Cossacks, 4,000 of whom were women and 1,500 children, was conducted by Lieutenant-General Charles Keightley, commanding the British Fifth Corps. He too maintained that he did the right thing, that there was no other way. This will remain on his conscience. But not all his officers took the same view. Major Davies, liaison officer between the British and the Cossacks, the man who in fact carried out the operation, has much to confess as he recalls those terrible days. Yes, he liked them, he even made friends with some of them, and then. . . . Then he kept the truth from them, deceived them and in the end carried out the operation. All this he discusses now with grief and an unconcealed feeling of guilt. With his own eyes he saw a Cossack who had shot his wife and two children and then himself. All this he remembers with horror. Still, orders were orders. And he was a soldier.

John Greig, a lieutenant in the 46th Recce Regiment who saved 1000 Cossacks in Neumarkt, near Lienz, was also a soldier; but he disobeyed his orders. He told his Cossacks what was going to happen, and half of them ran away. "I make no bones about it, neither am I ashamed of it", he says now, thirty years later.

Brigadier R. Firebrace, liaison officer between the War Office and the Soviet Military Mission, saved one man, only one; but still he saved him. On one occasion, he says, he gave in to emotion and made a Russian into a Pole, although he knew that he was a Soviet citizen. This should speak for him in the next world.

Another officer came almost to the point of disobeying orders—Lieutenant-Colonel H.E.N. Bredin, who commanded the 2nd Battalion, London Irish Rifles. His men carried out their orders to escort prisoners-of-war to the East without enthusiasm. In the end Bredin had to say to his superiors, "This is serious, because my men are on the verge of saying, 'We won't obey your orders, we won't take these men where they're just going to be mown down.' " The London Irish battalion was replaced by another unit.

And there was another soldier whose name we don't know. Georgi Shelest, a Cossack, has reason to remember him with gratitude. He was guarding a bridge and he gave Shelest a little piece of paper, which he tore off a pad. It saved three people's lives—Shelest's, his wife's, and his nine-month-old baby's. And no doubt there were other soldiers who did the same.

In a small cemetery in Lienz there is a burial place for 27 people who killed themselves that day. These are the ones who preferred to die rather than return to their Motherland.

Traitors? Fighters for their country's freedom? I make no judgment. One day history will find the answer. But one thing is plain. Those joyful spring days of victory in 1945 were the beginning of tragedy, in some cases the end of tragedy, for tens of thousands of Russians, and not only Russians. Not many survived. Those who did can tell the rest of the story.

Perhaps one day I shall come across them. I don't only mean the victims. I would also like to meet General Bredin, Brigadier Firebrace, Lieutenant Greig, and the unknown soldier who guarded the bridge. I'd shake their hands and tell them, "No, it is not Anthony Eden, Lord Avon, who personifies Britain for me—it is you, because you disobeyed your orders and obeyed your hearts." Probably I am a bad soldier.

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DISCUSSION

Obsessions of Justice

Nuremberg Reconsidered

By Donald C. Watt

"CONSPIRACIES", a man from the US National Archives was recently quoted as saying, "We are used to conspiracies." The thought is an appropriate one with which to re-examine the history and functioning of the Nuremberg War Crimes trial, or to give it its proper name, the Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal sitting at Nuremberg.

This trial has always been a thorn in the side of German traditionalists (including those of the extreme left) as an example of victor's justice. The indefatigible Werner Maser, who despite all his protestations finds it difficult to evade the suspicion of holding a sneaking sympathy for the less criminal aspects of Hitler's Germany, has recently examined the issues raised by Nuremberg for Germans of like outlook to his.[1] Much more interesting however for ENCOUNTER's readers must be the historical re-examination of the origins and course of the tribunal recently produced by the American historian Bradley Smith,[2] an account based on detailed research in the papers, both public and private, of the Tribunal itself and of some of its members, and on the supporting material in the US and British official records.

The picture Professor Smith paints is by no means entirely edifying. Very briefly stated, his thesis is that the prosecuting governments made an unholy hash of both the indictment and the presentation of that indictment to the tribunal; that the defence counsel were so emotionally involved in defending "the German people" (who did not figure on the indictment) that they failed to provide the tribunal with any logical or rational resolution of the legal problems created by the matter and manner of presentation of the prosecution's case; and that the eight members of the Tribunal had therefore to undertake the task themselves. In so doing they tended to split less on national lines than between those who wanted to be "hard" on those arraigned and those who felt that the German Nation rather than those arraigned should be in the dock, and so, paradoxically, appeared "soft." In Professor Smith's view (and he is, admittedly, not a lawyer but a historian) they did not do so bad a job of resolving the problems. Among other things, they ensured that future wars would not be followed by mass purge trials (Professor Smith's view, not mine). They did result in a recasting of both the American and the British armies' military legislation, though prosecutions for breach of the revised regulations have been somewhat rare (with the obvious exception of Lieutenant Calley in Viet Nam).

IT IS TEMPTING to see echoes of the assault by the American Left on the American action in Viet Nam—and such manifestations of international agit-prop as the so-called "Stockholm war crimes tribunal"—in Professor Smith's approach. Such temptations should be firmly resisted. Professor Smith confines himself strictly to Nuremberg, and to the major war criminals. He does not even touch on the twelve subordinate war crimes trials on which the Americans embarked, of Krupp, I. G. Farben, Milch, the Wilhelmstrasse, the High Command, and so on; though there is much in these illustrative of his general theme. His central theme is the American dominance of the arraignment and the indictment, and the reactions of the British, French, and Soviet authorities thereto. No one comes very well out of the story, certainly not the British, who were caught unprepared and off-balance by the pressures from their American allies. The Soviet judges, as opposed to the Soviet prosecution and the Soviet government, come off remarkably well, all things being considered. Much the same could be said of the French, especially of the stand taken by the senior French judge, Dieudonné de Fabres, if only he had not allowed himself to be overcome in the end.

The two most disconcerting aspects of American policy, as outlined by Professor Smith, were their twin obsessions with *conspiracy* and *collective guilt*. The obsessions were interlocked and mutually dependent. They were, however, so central to the American approach that they require a little elaboration.

[1] *Nürnberg: Tribunal der Sieger*. By WERNER MASER. Econ Verlag (Dusseldorf).

[2] *Reaching Judgment at Nuremberg: The Untold Story of How the Nazi War Criminals Were Judged*. By BRADLEY F. SMITH. Basic Books, $15.00; André Deutsch, £6.50.

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THE IDEA OF invoking the Anglo-American legal concept of "conspiracy" owes its legal application in the trial of the major war criminals to an American memorandum produced in September 1944 by Colonel Murray C. Bernays of the War Department's Special Projects Branch in an attempt to mediate in the very bitter conflict over the post-war treatment of Germany, between Henry Stimson, the Secretary for War, and Henry Morgenthau, Roosevelt's Secretary of the Treasury. Bernays proposed a representative trial, on charges of conspiracy, of selected members of the various Nazi organisations. Once the guilt of the various organisations had been established, then any Nazi arrestee could be proceeded against, the onus of proof of non-involvement in the crimes committed by the organisation being on the defendant. The idea of prosecuting for conspiracy to launch an aggressive war was particularly welcome to Henry Stimson, whose hopes of advancing the cause of international legality as a means of reducing the threat of war dated back to his days as Herbert Hoover's Secretary of State. Such precedents as existed for declaring war "illegal" were all of American provenance, relying as they did mainly on the Havana Declaration of 1928, the League Covenant and the Kellogg-Briand Pact. No definition of "aggression" had ever been agreed. The Litvinov protocol of 1933 had spelt out such a definition but had largely been ignored by most of the major powers, and those minor powers which adhered to it had in most cases failed to ratify it. The British view was that prosecution on the charges of initiating war was impossible under existing international law.

The more bloodthirsty element in the British cabinet, led by the Lord Chancellor (to his shame) and echoed by Churchill and Eden, repeatedly advocated the summary execution of 50–100 leading figures without trial. Churchill took such a proposal to Cairo and Teheran. To its credit the Cabinet repeatedly turned such proposals down, deciding in November 1944 (in typically British manner) to defer a decision until the American and Soviet positions were clarified. The Russians—Stalin's remarks at Teheran notwithstanding—insisted on a trial, though of whom was not clear. The Cabinet was, therefore, unprepared when the victory of the US War Department was signalled in April 1945 by the descent on London of Judge Sam Rosenman. Draconian to the last, the Lord Chancellor proposed acceptance of the US plan to prosecute selected Nazi organisations as a means of getting at the smaller fry. For the top criminals he returned to the idea of arraignment followed by disposal. Once again the Cabinet rejected his proposals as involving the worst aspects of both the judicial and the political alternatives.

Roosevelt's death threw the whole scheme into the melting pot again. One of Harry Truman's first acts as President was to appoint Chief Justice Robert Jackson Chief Counsel for the Prosecution. At the end of May he in turn descended on London where the new "Caretaker" Cabinet was largely marking time until the election was over. Caught unawares by this new development (and worried mainly by public pressure for rapid demobilisation in America), the Cabinet welcomed a trial as a means of retaining public support for the occupation of Germany. A Four-Power conference, meeting in London at the end of June and throughout July, agreed a Charter for the Tribunal and its constitution, despite Jackson's attempts to steamroller the US proposals through by threatening to hold a separate trial of those leaders who had fallen into American hands.

THE LONDON CONFERENCE SUCCEEDED in momentarily squashing the idea of a separate conspiracy charge. It struck both the French and the Soviets as a barbarous legal anachronism, and a concept alien to their respective legal systems. Crimes committed by groups and combinations of individuals they recognised; and prosecution by category was something the Soviets understood. But the Charter and Constitution of the International Military Tribunal listed three counts only: Crimes against Peace (a Soviet formulation), War Crimes, and Crimes against Humanity (a suggestion of the great Hersch Lauterpacht). "Conspiracy" only entered into the concept of Crimes against Peace. Crimes against Humanity were limited to other illegal acts linked with Aggressive War, limiting the scope of any indictment to actions after 1 September 1939, unless conspiracy could have been proved to exist *before* that date.

It should be noted that, at this date, preliminary investigation by US documentary teams had left the would-be prosecutors singularly short of hard evidence. This only began to come in from August 1945 onwards. A Soviet proposal that the preparation of the detailed case should be divided between the four prosecuting governments left it open to the Americans to reintroduce the conspiracy charge as a separate Count (Count I), to overwhelm the Tribunal subsequently with documentary evidence, and to hog much of the limelight and attention by outlining the conspiratorial element in charges that were, in fact, the British, French or Soviet responsibility to prepare and present to the Court.

As Bradley Smith points out, this represented a singular misjudgment of the contemporary mood in Europe. In the aftermath of liberation,

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abstract discussion of plans for Aggressive War in 1937, or plots against the German constitution in 1933, was not what was uppermost in European minds. Attention in Europe was focused on the slaughter of Allied civilians; the ruthless treatment of prisoners of war; the systematic extermination of the old, the unfit, the gypsies and the Jews. The American fixation on conspiracies (seen at its most extreme in the prosecution case against I. G. Farben)[3] played down, or neglected, the issues of responsibility for these monstrosities. Moreover, the Americans were unable to, or reluctant to, specify who was a party to the grand conspiracy, when it began, or whether its objectives had changed over the years. The extreme American view (the case against I. G. Farben again) construed the Nazi party as engaged in a criminal conspiracy against peace from its very foundation.

Much the same misreading of German history can be seen in the choice of the organisations to be prosecuted. Six organisations were named in the indictment: the leadership corps of the Nazi party, the Reichs Cabinet, the General Staff and the High Command, the *SA*, the *SS*, and the *Gestapo*. Of these the first could have been taken as covering everyone down to the rank of *Block-* or *Zellenleiter*. The second hardly met after 1934 and not at all after 1936. The third was pronounced by the members of the Tribunal to have had no collective existence outside "the charge in the indictment." The *SA* had been largely destroyed as a political force in the bloodbath of 30 June 1934. Even the *SS* included in the latter days of the Reich large numbers of purely military units with conscript members. Again, the American drafters of the indictment failed to clarify the relationship between individual defendants and the organisation as whose representative they were on trial. Nor did they define the period of time within which the organisation was alleged to have been engaged in criminal actions.

THE ORIGINAL US LIST OF DEFENDANTS (46 names) was reduced to 16. It included no leading German industrialist. It did not include Bormann or Sauckel or Jodl. It included Schacht as a Cabinet member but not von Schirach, von Papen, or von Neurath. French and Soviet insistence added the names of Alfred Krupp, Admiral Raeder, von Schirach, Sauckel, Jodl, Bormann, von Papen, von Neurath, and Fritsche. An American clerical error substituted Gustav Krupp for Alfred (*i.e.* the aged, mentally incompetent and physically incontinent President for the managing director). The final grouping included none of Hitler's immediate accomplices. Goebbels and Himmler, like Hitler himself, were dead, as was Heydrich. Bormann had disappeared. There remained Hermann Goering who had been out of favour since 1940; a group of former associates who had been exiled to quasi-colonial Gauleiterships, Rosenberg, Frank, von Neurath, Seyss-Inquart, Frick, von Schirach; Keitel, Jodl, Raeder and Doenitz for the military; Funk, Sauckel, Speer and Ley (who killed himself before the trial began) for war industry; Kaltenbrunner for the *Gestapo*, but not Heinrich Mueller who had disappeared, not even *in absentia*; Hans Fritsche, but not Otto Dietrich, for propaganda; Schacht, who was found in a Nazi prison, and had been in secret communication with the Allies in 1940 (and whom Hitler had sacked in 1938); von Papen (on whom the French insisted, though from 1939 onwards he had been a mere ambassador in a neutral country); and Julius Streicher, a provincial purveyor of anti-Semitic pornography so disgusting that even Hitler had dropped him from favour in 1940.

SOME INDICATION OF the Tribunal's view of the prosecution case can be gathered from its final judgment. Only two organisations were pronounced criminal, the *SS* and the *Gestapo*. Only 8 of the 22 charged under Count I (conspiracy to wage aggressive war) were found guilty, all of whom were also found guilty under Count 2 (participating in specific crimes against peace). The Tribunal in fact condemned the entire philosophy of the American case, of the prosecution's presentation of that case, resting as it did on a charge of grand conspiracy lasting 25 years and covering half a continent And, on the organisations, the final judgment warned that group prosecution was a "far-reaching and novel procedure" which "unless properly safeguarded" might produce great injustice. Even where organisations were declared criminal, condemnation was limited to those who could be shown to have known the organisation to be criminal and to have joined voluntarily. So far did this fail to satisfy the US Occupation Authorities that they used Control Council Law 10 to pass their own statute setting penalties under de-Nazification procedures for various war crimes including the "crime" of organisational membership.

It is worth pausing for a moment to reflect on the origins of this phenomenon, a theory of conspiracy so far-reaching as to fail to convince even the US members of the Military Tribunal, Francis Biddle and John J. Parker.

[3] On this, see the unwittingly revealing memoirs of the US Prosecuting Counsel, Josiah E. Dubois Jr., *Generals in Grey Suits* (London, 1953).

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IT APPEARS TO HAVE SPRUNG FROM the concurrence of three quite separate sets of events. The first lay in the presence in Rooseveltian Washington of a proclivity to smell conspiracies in any and every organised opposition to the plans of the New Dealers. As with so much else in American history the prejudices and suspicions of the unlearned had become the mental furniture of their educated betters. Conspiracy theories go back to the Populists at least. What was new in the 1920s and 1930s was that educated men came to give credence and a façade of rationality to the conspiracy theories of the unlettered.

There had been a conspiracy to secure American entry into the First World War. Big business (the "economic royalists") were conspiring to overthrow the Constitution and the New Deal. There was a Communist-anarchist-Jewish-Negro conspiracy to deny States rights and make Roosevelt king. Charles A. Beard, the distinguished American historian, called it America's need for a Devil Theory before subscribing to such a theory himself in his examination of Roosevelt's foreign policy. Roosevelt himself turned sharply against the Axis after Munich in part as a reaction to widespread reports of a Nazi conspiracy in South America. These, mark you, were not the lucubrations of near-illiterate Arkansas rednecks but of the aristocratic, privately educated, widely-read Roosevelt scion himself. Washington itself was riddled with factions and clandestine groups, including those fellow-travelling *sub rosa* groups whose members so often surfaced in later life under the klieg lights and TV cameras of rival Congressional Committees in the era of Joseph McCarthy. No one believes in conspiracies so easily as the mildly conspiratorial. Twenty-five-year-long conspiracies of three or four million people against peace are not difficult to believe in such an atmosphere.

The second strain was the presence in New York and elsewhere of a number of refugees from Hitler's Germany, many of a Marxist persuasion, already persuaded that Weimar had been overthrown by a "capitalist conspiracy" in which Hitler and the Nazis were simply the pawns of the *Herrenklub*. Von Papen appeared in the dock in the end because he, it was believed, had sold Hitler both to the *Herrenklub* and to Hindenberg. For these refugees it was the persecution of the 1930s of which they themselves were victims which bulked largest in their minds, as it was Hitler's dismantlement of Weimar in the six months which followed the *Machtergreifung*. Smith remarks that as late as 1949 Bernays, himself Jewish, could make the "incredible assertion" (Smith's words) that most of the anti-Jewish atrocities had been committed "before the war." The Washington refugees had escaped Germany long before the *Endlösung* was set in motion, and the State Department, for reasons of its own, did its best to sit on the reports of the Holocaust that since the spring of 1942 had begun to come out of Nazi Europe.

There is a further point to this. The British Foreign Office records make it clear that the problem of how to deal with the perpetrators of the numerous atrocities which disfigured the German occupation of so much of Europe was constantly pressed on them by representatives of the governments-in-exile, led by the Poles. While remaining sceptical about the extent of the charges at first (many of which were only too reminiscent of the reports spread by the propagandists in the 1914–18 war), the Foreign Office were driven to accept their general reliability and (as with the Japanese) to consider whether the threat of justice after the War might not act as a deterrent on some of the worst excesses.

In mulling this over the officials of the Foreign Office were hampered by two continuing considerations. They were determined to avoid the fiasco of the 1918–19 prosecutions of German war criminals by German courts under Allied pressure. And they feared that action before the War ended (the example of the Russians who staged a war crimes trial in Kharkhov in 1943) might result in counter-measures against Allied prisoners-of-war. When they agreed in October 1942 to the establishment of a United Nations Commission to investigate war crimes, their targets were the perpetrators of individual war crimes and crimes against the populations of occupied Europe. As the general outlines of the "Final Solution" became known, as atrocity followed atrocity, from Lidice to the Ardeatine Caves, the general criminality of the system and the need not to let the leaders go free while their underlings stood trial made it clear that something would have to be done about the Nazi leadership. But precisely what that something was divided the Cabinet. It was only in America, after Henry Morgenthau's discovery of the "leniency" of the State Department's plans for post-War Germany had driven him to cast the vials of his wrath against Germany, that the problem of the Nazi leadership was tackled head-on and from the beginning without any of the scaling-up from below current in Britain.

WHICH BRINGS US TO the third consideration. John Blum,[4] himself an absentee warrior in the Pacific during the War years, recently pointed out that American opinion at home had to be "sold the war." The process of selling involved the

[4] John Blum, *V was for Victory: Politics and American Culture during World War II* (New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976).

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cultivation of fear and hatred first of Nazis and then of all Germans and Japanese. Since propaganda requires a personalised focus, the iniquity of the Nazi leadership was the common coin of newspaper, radio, and film propaganda. For opinion at home in America, enjoying a consumer-goods boom which wiped out all memories of the Depression in a manner unimaginable in Britain, the War was a spectator sport, an all-in wrestling match between the heavy villain and the hero figure, in which booing the villain was the only part of the action in which the audience got to participate. Since the German leadership were irretrievably wicked and villainous it stood to reason that they had been absolutely so from the very beginning. Common sense, operating *in vacuo*, might throw doubt on such a proposition. But in the atmosphere of War-time America, it seemed to make perfect sense. No one in such an atmosphere was going to exercise the cold light of historical judgment on so seemingly plausible a proposition as that Hitler had spelt out his whole conspiratorial programme in *Mein Kampf*, and that anyone thereafter who joined the Nazi party knew exactly what he was letting himself in for and what it was he was supporting. Thus Mr Dubois tried desperately hard to convict I. G. Farben of having been involved in such a conspiracy in the 1920s and made much of I. G. Farben's contribution to Hitler's election fund in 1932 and 1933. Hence the conspiracy charges, eventually anchored to the Hossbach conference of 5 November 1937. And hence, in later years, the quasi-indictment of Lyndon Johnson, Dean Rusk, and the others for their role in America's involvement in Viet Nam.

BY CONTRAST British opinion remained much less cognisant of the implications of Nuremberg. Hitler, Goebbels, and Himmler were already dead. Goering cheated the gallows, winning the faintest sneaking admiration. The remainder went to their death at the hands of an English hangman or disappeared into Spandau to serve out their sentences. Some even went free, a circumstance that seemed to guarantee the justness of the other sentences. The implications for Britain remained unappreciated. Certainly when Lord Avon manoeuvred Britain into the Suez disaster, hardly a voice was heard even to raise the question whether his actions might fall within the scope of Count I of the London Charter, or of Counts I and II of the Nuremberg indictment. For British opinion Nuremberg was unique. What was so hard to endure was the economic recovery and then the rearmament of Germany.

Outside legal circles, worried by the applicability of the doctrine *nulla poena sine lege* to the Nuremberg proceedings, opinion in Britain (on the surface at least) has remained remarkably untroubled by the rights and wrongs of the Nuremberg trial, save for the continued presence in Spandau of the ageing Rudolf Hess, always one of the least credible of war criminals as war criminality was conceived by that section of British public which had thought its way past the general doctrine of the collective guilt of the Nazis and/or Germans. British opinion continued to accept the apocalyptic view of the Second World War and the absoluteness of the evil represented by Hitler, his entourage, and Nazism *per se*. As for the trial itself, its necessity—endorsed by the majority of both the War Cabinet and the caretaker cabinet which followed it and the Attlee cabinet which ratified the agreements and prepared the indictment—would hardly be contested today; and, given its necessity, the most important element thereafter was to let justice be seen to be done, at least in the manner in which the trial was conducted.

Professor Smith has however prepared two jolts for this spirit of complacency. He makes it clear that the German defence lawyers by and large did a very much worse job than the British desire for fair play would find acceptable. In part this arose from their misconstruction of the trial as a collective indictment of the German Nation, and in part from their own inability to adjust to adversary systems of justice. But it arose also from the wilful obstruction most of them suffered while trying to prepare their case. By contrast the defence lawyers in the subordinate Nuremberg trials enjoyed far greater access to the mass of Nazi documentation from which the prosecution case had been formulated, and enjoyed a far greater degree of success in defending their clients.

The second point Professor Smith makes is peculiarly calculated to awaken the dominant British obsession. He points out that in certain important marginal cases the passage of the death sentence seemed to correspond to some extent with the social origins of the accused, those upper-class (or *edel*) by origin standing a far greater chance of escaping the death penalty. Typical cases are the condemnation of Sauckel to death where Speer received twenty years; and the death-sentence on Streicher, admittedly a Jew-baiter of the most extreme kind, but one inactive for a year or more before the fateful meeting at Wannsee and the initiation of the Final Solution. It will be interesting to see how far Professor Smith's revelations pass into the common currency of social and political debate in Britain.

WHAT, THEN, SHOULD BE the verdict of history on the Nuremberg trials? Were they a mistake? Should there have been a summary

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tribunal followed by immediate execution, as Churchill and Sir John Simon advocated (and as many others, disturbed by the very elaborateness and length of time the process of justice took, argued at the time)? On this Professor Smith is silent. His own views only intrude obliquely when he comments that the punitive nature of the destruction wrought in the last months of the War on Germany's cities and civilians by the Allied bombing offensive, and the general assumption of collective guilt entertained by the military occupiers, at all levels from commander-in-chief to private soldier (and, as he shows, by some of the judges at Nuremberg), deprived the Allies of much of their right to sit in justice on those whom they had punished.

These are not unfamiliar views, for all the fact that even now they can be expected to elicit only minority support among his readers. They have something in common with Mr David Irving's condemnation of those who ordered the bombing of Dresden (though Professor Smith, it should be made clear, is no "Irvingite"). His main contribution is to show how Nuremberg took the course it did. Clearly he feels that the conspiracy charge was misconceived and mistaken, and that of all the contentious elements in the Nuremberg proceedings it is the one most open to legal challenge, on the principle *nulla poena sine lege*. These views are, however, essentially those of a moralist rather than a historian. Not that the historian should abjure moral judgment. But he should be clear himself and make it clear to others that the exercise of moral judgment and the exercise of professional historical judgment are two quite separate functions, and that expertise in the second does not confer any additional authority on a historian's exercise of the first.

In assessing the consequences of Nuremberg and the possible consequences of the alternatives advocated at the time, the historian treads the uneasy path between the insufficiently researched and the hypothetical. Where the immediate effect of the Trials is concerned, the older historians can draw on their own experience. The Nuremberg Trials released for immediate historical research an enormous body of historical evidence, and provoked the release of much more. The first collection, *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, could well have been dispensed with (published, as it was, only in frequently misleading translation into Germanised American). But the 42 volumes of transcripts, indexes, and documents given in evidence in the main Nuremberg trial, and the 15 odd volumes of selections from the 12 subsequent trials documented for all to see and read the realities of the National Socialist state, the National Socialist method of waging war, and the National Socialist vision of Europe's future. Under its impact even the frequently appalling cruelties and injustices of the post-VE-Day expulsion of the Germans from Eastern Europe[5] passed unnoticed outside Germany, and even inside Western Germany they never fired that sense of injured and betrayed nationalism on which Germany's first experiment in parliamentary democracy foundered after 1918. Nuremberg killed Nazism dead. (It has only a spectral reappearance in the way-out accoutrements of California "bikies" and British "punk-rockers.") No martyr's cult has sprung up around those self-immolated in the Bunker or hung in the Nuremberg jail.

NUREMBERG COMPLETED what the Allied victory had begun—it eliminated for at least a generation the authoritarian tradition in European politics, which only survives in Europe today as a non-European importation imposed and maintained by the armed forces of a non-European culture. There is no more striking indication of the rejection of European culture by the world Europe once dominated than the contrast between the steady disappearance of multi-party political systems outside Europe and their establishment even in the outer fringes of Europe, Spain, Portugal, Greece, in the last decade. Outside Europe (even in areas of long established European settlement such as Latin America and Africa) military dictatorship or open or disguised one-party rule is the norm rather than the exception. Only North America, Israel, and Australasia cleave to the European tradition of legitimised and legitimate opposition; only Japan and India have accepted and maintained this tradition. The split in Turkey's soul between her Islamic origins and her European ambitions is nowhere more clearly displayed than in the record of opposition parties since 1920.

It is surely legitimate for a historian to infer that it was the experience of the "New Order" and the "Thousand Year Reich" (which Europe alone experienced) which made for this rejection of one of the most deep-rooted and persistent elements in European political philosophy, culture, and tradition. It is legitimate, too, to argue that the publication of the inner workings of the Third Reich resulting on the Nuremberg Trial formed an essential part of the process by which this rejection was accepted and confirmed by the peoples of Europe. In the rejection of and resistance to the Soviet presence in central Europe, which (whatever American revisionists may conclude about US policy and opinion) was the essential element in West Europe's partici-

[5] On which see Alfred de Zayas, *Nemesis at Potsdam: The Anglo-Americans and the Expulsion of the Germans* (Routledge, 1977).

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pation in the Cold War, the instinctive identification of Soviet authoritarianism with the Nazi embodiment of European authoritarianism was the single most important factor. In the unbalanced excitement with which books which deviate from orthodox history are initially greeted, as once with A. J. P. Taylor's *Origins of the Second World War* and now with Mr Irving's study of Hitler (an atmosphere singularly inappropriate to historical debate), it is surely not imagination to see fear that it is the very conquest of authoritarianism which is being questioned. And, finally, even the more critical eye turned by Professor Smith and others on Nuremberg, as on Allied behaviour at the end of the War,[6] illustrates the continuation of this victory; for the questions asked relate only to the degree to which Allied practice had itself become contaminated by the vicious example of the Third Reich. There is no question of rehabilitating the defeated.

IT IS ON THIS POINT that Professor Smith's book offers the most reassurance. Those who wished to practise a primitive vengeance on the German people, whether by reducing them to the level of peasant subsistence (as did Henry Morgenthau) or by summary executions by categories (as Churchill, Simon and others), cannot but appear to the historian as examples of the degree to which the victors were exposing themselves to infection by just those strains in European culture which Nazism most embodied and which they most condemned in the Nazi record. They were overruled (and came to change their own minds) by the processes of democratic government. Their fellows in government found the proposals simply impossible to stomach. Had that revulsion not obtained, history might have come to feel that Nazism triumphed even in its own destruction.

[6] As by Dr de Zayas and by Nicholas Bethell, *The Last Secret* (1974).

Hills

The simple seriousness of hills—
dull humps and withers, brown
with stubble or moss-green,
bent as if they could graze,
or maybe were praying—old fidels,
foreheads against the hidden stone—
foreheads and knees. . . .

Their simple gravity is so great
that they can pull a man down too
to his knees, if he look suddenly
at them, as if the will
crumbled, confronted with such weight
as hauls their long slopes downward through
field after field and holds them still

a thousand thousand years. Sometimes,
passing them in a car, cornered,
clock-ridden, you can almost weep
for wanting to walk out or run
the length of their dry-cymes,
dead-leaves, blackbird-
empty aphelion—

till Spring—or Ice, or Inland Sea—
come round again—and lose this hour-
hand hewing at our lives. Oh, hills
have time and time and time
to try the dust's humility,
and strengthen prophets and empower
lovers by their long paradigm.

Peter Kane Dufault

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IN THE MARGIN

North-South News

THE DAY we sat around the Aspen-Berlin round table with Afro-Asian editors, having a lively theoretical discussion about the future of press freedom in the Third World, there appeared in all the newspapers a news item cabled from Tunis. Whether from AP, UP, Reuters or Agence-France-Presse, it reported pretty much the same event.

A leading Tunisian trade-unionist had been arrested. Bourguiba's government had accused him of being responsible for the recent wave of "wild-cat political strikes." The charge was "pro-Communist agitation" under the cloak of wage demands.

Now what should one have made of this? Was it an example of objective factual Western news-reporting? No one doubted that the strikes had happened, that the trade-unionist in question had been jailed. But wasn't it really yet another case of "white cultural imperialism", with Western correspondents seizing upon another bit of bad news to blacken the name of the New Nations? Why wasn't the good news ever reported, the opening of a new factory, the completion of a gigantic dam and hydro-electric plant?

Well, if White Western journalism was so one-sided and distorting, how would the Third World deal with the facts of the case? UNESCO, as its Yugoslav representative at our round table made quite clear, was supporting the principle of a "New International Informational Order." Afro-Asians would displace the old imperialist news-merchants and gather their own facts and figures, prepare their own dispatches, wire them everywhere via their own brand-new communications systems. The UNESCO man (Asher DeLeon) waxed eloquent on the subject: it was a grand cultural ideal, a true mental revolution, and it needed no patronising help from the West (thus rejecting out of hand the offers of the International Press Institute to help train Third World journalists up to professional standards).[1]

So what would have happened to that news item from Tunis in the spirit of UNESCO's new ideals for so-called developmental journalism? A dozen progressive governments would have censored the item in order not to encourage the idea of strikes and wage-demands. Another two dozen revolutionary states would have suppressed the item for the only source of sabotage is after all anti-Communism. And what would have been the reaction of TANJUG, the Yugoslav news agency which now ambitiously operates a wire-service pool for Tito's friends, a host of Mediterranean and Middle-Eastern subscribers? Which of them would be interested in yet another squib about some political arrest?

The contradictions were apparent, and Peter Galliner (the director of the IPI) made a valiant defence of the principle of the "free flow of news", and for a plurality of international news-gathering agencies as against the UNESCO-sponsored state monopolies of all media. As he remarked drily:

> "There is a very obvious advantage for Third World leaders in encouraging objective and accurate reporting. If a government controls its media, how can any neighbouring government then trust news reports put out by its national news agency? It is hardly beneficial for any state if they learn about each other only what their leaders allow. . . . UNESCO has turned a blind eye to the fact that the majority of Third World countries, having a government-controlled press, constantly violate the laws of press freedom by imposing censorship, imprisoning and harassing local journalists and expelling foreign correspondents."

OUT THROUGH the windows of the Aspen-Berlin Institute one got a rather peaceful impression of the Wannsee and its East-West dividing lines which once gave rise to war-like tensions. But inside a new conflict seemed to rage, modishly called these days the North-South confrontation; and I was quite unaware until then as to how embattled the positions had become, and with what David-like courage the rather small International Press Institute (based in London and Zurich, but representing independent editors and publishers in some 60 nations) was taking on the Goliaths of the UN bureaucracy, armed with vast budgets and protected by overwhelming majorities. How could one fail to be moved when somebody—a lonely, harassed sentimentalist, with his back to the wall—remarked:

> "... But the philosophy of freedom is not solely a modern Western invention. It has roots among the ancient Greeks and Hebrews, the early African spirit of Ikhenaton, the tradition of Confucius, and the writings of Rousseau, Milton and Jefferson. . . ."

[1] There is a vigorous account of all this in Leonard Sussman's illuminating "Washington Paper", *Mass News Media and the Third World Challenge*, $3.00, 1977, published by Sage for Georgetown University).

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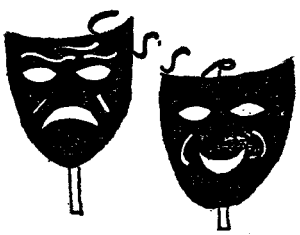
What hope, then, that this grand old spirit could take root in a world of new nations which, as Conor Cruise O'Brien bitterly confirmed, is dominated by authoritarian, dictatorial, illiberal régimes? It wasn't a matter of the hoary old polemic about socialism or capitalism, private enterprise or nationalised institutions. The Aspen debate emphasised the new balance of principle among the Western spokesmen whose voices are in danger of being cut off in most continents. The Third (and Fourth) World can socialise its factories if it pleases, nationalise its agriculture if it must, put into public ownership its cultural and educational institutions. But if there remains no private area anywhere, no "interstices of freedom", for reflection, for research, for criticism, for independent news-gathering, for fair and many-sided discussion, it is doomed: doomed to inefficiency, corruption, and poverty, to propaganda and mendacity, and to the wild unpredictable irresponsibility of power-mad cliques who prate of liberation and consign the millions to new forms of exploitation and enslavement.

I am not particularly enamoured of wild-cat political strikes, but long live that North African trade-unionist! I never thought of wire-service agency reporters as the noble heroes of the free Western mind, but faced with the prospect of a big *Tass* and a super *Hsinhua* everywhere in the world, then all hail to the AP, UP, AFP, and Reuters!

Some Joke



I HAVE TRIED sedulously, if with something less than complete success, to avoid being trapped in a London theatre whenever some new production of our school of new English playwrights gets put on. Pity the poor hapless young men of talent who came of age in the 1960s when intellectual illiteracy and ideological simple-mindedness rubbed off on every ambitious page of writing . . . from Edward Bond and David Mercer to Christopher Hampton and Trevor Griffiths.

My vow must have been made about ten years ago when a play of Hampton about *tupamaro* revolutionism presented a miserable bourgeois diplomat (played in misery by Paul Scofield, silent and chained to the bedposts) who gets eloquent lessons in dialectics from a brilliant teen-age terrorist. In point of fact—for it was based on "real life"—the British Ambassador in question (Sir Geoffrey Jackson, and he has written a book about it) knew more about both Marxism and South American social conditions than his political captors and actually succeeded in arguing himself into freedom. That was the true bit of "theatre" in the incident!

One evening many years later I tortured myself through a performance of Sir John Gielgud in a Bond play about Shakespeare. Near-silence on the stage was also the Bard's fate as he sinks into oblivion, unable to think or write, as a consequence of his petty-bourgeois greed, his material corruption, his soul-destroying devotion to his accumulated goods and properties. You see, Poetry and Capitalism (early or late) just don't go together. Since the new social order has not yet been proclaimed in the land I don't suppose that wild horses could drag me into the Royal Shakespeare's new Bond production, something called *The Bundle* which, as I read in the *Herald Tribune*'s theatre notice (John Walker, 24 January), is

> "an austere Brechtian parable, a history lesson in which capitalist society is not merely analyzed or explained but judged and found wanting. The message seems to be not only that society needs changing, but that it should be changed now, through merciless revolution. . . . The revolutionary hero of Bond's play insists that do-gooders are enemies of the people, obstructions to the creation of a just and equitable society."

How is it, then, that young spirits in this late-late ugliness of a decadent society still manage to find within themselves the creativity to go on writing? Presumably because, unlike greedy old Shakespeare, they write not for money but for love, or justice, or fun.

No, not fun. I take that back. At the Royal Court there is a new play by Peter Barnes entitled *Laughter*, and the author apparently sets us right in the prologue:

> "Laughter cures nothing but our consciences and so ends by making the nightmare worse . . . it softens our hatred. . . . Laughter's too feeble a weapon against the barbarities of life. . . . Root it out!"

The argument came as a dispiriting surprise to Bernard Levin and, as he noted (*Sunday Times*, 5 February), it would also have come as a surprise to, among others, Swift, Aristophanes, Rabelais, Voltaire, Aesop, Juvenal, Heine, Cervantes, Beaumarchais, Lucian, Karl Kraus, Gogol, Villon, H. L. Mencken, Jaroslav Hasek, Karel Capek, Mark Twain and Ben Jonson. . . . You see, Laughter and Bourgeois Institutions just don't go together. Levin suspects that the playwright got the idea from Hannah Arendt, in

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some odd phrase about "the banality of evil." Perhaps.

PERHAPS, too, the inspiration for Trevor Griffiths' play *Comedians* came from some free-floating bit of Marxological mystification—say, T. W. Adorno's famous dictum that after Auschwitz no poetry can be written any more. Griffiths' central character, a melancholy ex-comedian named Eddie Waters, pronounces something to the effect that after Buchenwald nobody can make a joke any more. Since it is well known that in the Barnes-Griffiths era of modern culture no poems have been written and no jokes been cracked, the game is over and it's closing time, gentlemen, in the gardens of the West.

But a funny thing happened on the way to the theatre—the Thalia in Hamburg, where the author presided over what he called the "most important" production of his play ever put on the stage; and an adventurous thing it was too, with excellent actors and a director of ingenuity in Peter Zadek. I should have known better: but there I happened to be in the audience at the première a few weeks ago, in my usual slumped posture, head in hand, audibly moaning. Yet around me the German audience seemed to be enjoying themselves, chuckling, giggling, even laughing. The author took his curtain-calls and actually looked very pleased. What on earth had gone wrong? *Nobody is supposed to laugh any more*—at least not until after the Revolution.

Well, maybe it wasn't real, true, authentic, unalienated laughter. As the author takes the trouble to instruct us in the Thalia programme, there are only three possible positions that can be taken on the subject of Humour: a Capitalist one, a Social-Democratic one, and of course a Revolutionary position. So it is that in some dismal *lumpen proletarian* club of Manchester a motley group of would-be clowns, badly instructed by the Adorno method of the disenchanted Eddie Waters, go through their embarassing routines, foul with porno-gags, heavy with desperately high spirits, rotten-ripe for some liberating End which is sure to come. Alas, the Thalia actors—under Boy Gobert's supervision, one of the best troupes in Germany—were simply too good to be true. They made old jokes seem new, and tired melodies seem fresh. A flat-footed Irish jig took on ballet-like proportions. The pianist never played a wrong note. Poor Manchester revolutionary! Had he never learned—from Plato's *Republic*, for example—that artists make poor comrades?

Worse than that, the combination of sleazy texts and bravura performances converted the unsuspecting Hanseatic burghers to Mancunian cellar-club ways, reduced the *Theaterpublikum* to the vulgar levels of a raucous bowling-club's Saturday-nite-show in which sex is all snicker and anti-Semitism a giggle; it was the old vicious circle of bad art creating bad audiences.

Still, Trevor Griffiths' revolution slithered on, despite the tingle-tangle hijinks of the Hamburg production, to its textually pure dénouement. A would-be young comedian not unnaturally named Price breaks out of the cash-nexus of hopeless ambition, stabs out murderously at an elegantly-clad mannekin ("... a dark red stain, rapidly widening, begins to form behind the flower. *Aagh, aagh, aagh, aagh*"), picks up a tiny violin and plays—listen carefully, you'll spot the tune—*The Red Flag* ("very simple and direct, four bars"). If you still haven't got the message, then Price gives it to us twice in Act III.

> "Nothing's changed, Mr Waters, is what I'm saying. When I stand upright—like tonight at the club—I bang my head on the ceiling. Just like you fifty years ago. We're still caged, exploited, prodded and pulled at, milked, fattened, slaughtered, cut up, fed out. We still don't belong to ourselves. Nothing's changed. . . ."

Nothing sure has changed, not since Will Shakespeare sold out for a little piece of landed property. Violent revolutionaries sure have the best arguments. Life and culture are exhausted, with nobody writing poems, nobody capable of laughing. How will it all end? This is how (freely cribbed):

> "... Some say the world will end in fire. Some say in ice.... I hold with those who favour fire, but if I had to perish twice, I think I know enough of hate to say that for destruction ice is also great and would suffice."[1]

The Thalia audience applauded, and thought it was all good clean fun. A leading German critic told me in the lobby how really interesting all these new young English playwrights were, and I politely agreed; and he quoted me in his review the next morning.

BACK IN LONDON I turned on the late-night television—the political risks one takes!—and caught a glimpse of Trevor Griffiths explaining

[1] My quotations here are, of course, from the original English edition of *Comedians* (Faber & Faber, 1976). Faber has also published Griffiths' *Absolute Beginners*, about which the author himself makes the following memorable comment:

> "I was getting at something important in me, but also very important in terms of social and political process, to do with commitment to a revolutionary perspective which will inevitably eliminate humane considerations—of relationships, sympathy, care—and that seems to me to be a problem that we all face all the time."

What reserves I still have left of sympathy and care go out to the poor anguished fellow (if, frankly, only some of the time). But, between you and me, what humbug!

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how busy he has been recently on an adaptation of Chekhov's *Cherry Orchard*. Chekhov, you see, understood so little about politics, and the short-sighted chap needed to be helped along if we are to get a proper insight into how to resolve the "fundamental problems." His Riverdale production of the play will presumably instruct us how exactly to save the cherry orchard from being chopped down. As old Firs says in the last line before the final curtain, "Oh, you *nyedotyopa* . . ." or (as Michael Frayn translates it in the new National Theatre production), "Silly-billy!"

M.J.L.

AUTHORS

Claire Villiers has had short stories published in *The Guardian* and the *Sunday Telegraph*, and broadcast on BBC Radio. She contributed a section on nursery food to *The Great British Breakfast*, which will be published by Watmoughs at the end of 1978.

George Urban's conversation with Luigi Barzini originated in a Radio Free Europe broadcast. Among Mr Urban's recent books are *Détente* (Temple Smith, 1976) and *Hazards of Learning* (Open Court, USA; Temple Smith, London, 1977). A collection of his conversations on Euro-Communism, including those with Altiero Spinelli (ENCOUNTER, January 1978) and Lucio Lombardo Radice (May 1977), will be published in the autumn by Maurice Temple Smith under the title *Eurocommunism: Its Roots and Future in Italy and Elsewhere*.

Luigi Barzini sat until recently as a Liberal member of the Italian Chamber of Deputies to which he was elected in 1958. From 1944-47 he was editor and publisher of *Il Globo* in Rome, and had earlier been special correspondent of *Corriere della Sera*. His publications include *Americans Are Alone in the World* (1953), *The Italians* (1964), *From Caesar to the Mafia* (1971), and *O, America!* (Hamish Hamilton, London; Harper & Row, New York, 1977).

L. P. Wilkinson is a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge; he was Brereton Reader in Classics from 1969–74 and Orator, Cambridge University, from 1958–74. He is the author, among other works, of *Golden Latin Artistry* (Cambridge University Press, 1963), *The Georgics of Virgil* (Cambridge, 1969), and *The Roman Experience* (Elek, 1975). His series of four articles in ENCOUNTER is based on the Lord Northcliffe Lectures given at University College, London. Following his first themes of "Population & Family Planning", and "Women's Liberation", his subsequent themes will be "Nudism in Deed & Word" and "Homosexuality."

Elie Kedourie is Professor of Politics in the University of London and Editor of *Middle Eastern Studies*. His books include *Arabic Political Memoirs* (Frank Cass, 1974), *The Chatham House Version* (n.e. Weidenfeld, 1976) and, as editor, *The Economics and Economic History of the Middle East* (Cass, 1976); his *England and the Middle East* will be published this year by Harvester Press.

John Weightman is Professor of French at Westfield College, London. He is the author, among other books, of *The Triumph of the Avant-Garde* (Alcove Press, 1973), and the translator, with Doreen Weightman, of the works of Claude Lévi-Strauss—whose latest book, *The Origin of Table Manners*, will be published later this year by Jonathan Cape.

Philip French is film critic of *The Observer* and author of *The Movie Moguls* (1969) and *Westerns* (1973), which has just been re-issued by Secker & Warburg in a revised version. His contributions to ENCOUNTER include the autobiographical essay "The Hero as Stammerer" (November 1966) which was subsequently included in Richard Poirier and Frank Kermode's anthology, *The Oxford Reader*.

Ronald Hayman is the author of numerous books of literary criticism, and studies of contemporary playwrights and modern theatre. His *Artaud and After* was published last year by Oxford University Press, and *De Sade: A Critical Biography* is due out this spring from Constable.

Correlli Barnett's many books on military history include *The Desert Generals* (1960), *Britain and Her Army* (Allen Lane, 1970), *Marlborough* (Eyre Methuen, 1974), and *The War Lords* (Weidenfeld, 1976); his study of Napoleon Bonaparte will be published this spring by Allen & Unwin. He is a Fellow of Churchill College, Cambridge, and has been historical consultant and writer on several BBC Television series on war.

Donald C. Watt is Professor of International History, University of London. He is the author of *A History of the World in the 20th Century* (1969) *Personalities and Policies: Studies in the Formulation of British Foreign Policy in the 20th Century* (n.e. Greenwood Press, 1976), and *Too Serious A Business* (Temple Smith, 1975).

Peter Kane Dufault's selected poems *On Balance* are published by The Sagarin Press (Sand Lake, New York 12153).

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LETTERS

Scientific Freudianism?

PROFESSOR H. J. EYSENCK, in asking How Scientific is Freudianism? (January 1978), suggests that the reason so many people believe psychoanalysis works is that

> "neuroses are self-terminating . . . neurotics on the whole will get better, even recover completely, almost whatever happens in the meantime."

Presumably this applies equally to that alternative treatment for neurosis (Behaviour Therapy) which Professor Eysenck favours and which, he says, is "claiming much greater successes than have ever been reported for psychoanalysis." But how scientific then is the statement that "neuroses are self-terminating"?

ROBERT KEE

Richmond
Surrey

ROBERT KEE'S QUESTION is well taken, and deserves an answer. There are, in fact, several considerations. The first relates to the length of time taken up by behaviour therapy and psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis takes several years, and may in fact go on for 10, 20 or more years. Behaviour therapy is usually completed after a couple of months, and hardly ever goes on beyond three or four months. As the evidence shows that *spontaneous remission* (*i.e.* recovery from neurotic disorder without specifically psychiatric treatment) takes quite a long time, at least a year or two, it is much easier to identify recovery after psychoanalysis with spontaneous remission. This is difficult as far as behaviour therapy is concerned because the time taken is too short to allow for much of the effects of spontaneous remission.

Possibly even more convincing, however, is the fact that comparisons have been made between behaviour therapy and psychotherapy of the Freudian kind. Several of these comparisons have given clear-cut evidence of the superiority of behaviour therapy, even though in many cases the time spent by the therapist in psychotherapy was much longer than that spent by the behaviour therapist.

A last point. While the great majority of neurotic disorders are self-terminating, there are a number in which spontaneous remission does not take place. In view of the fact that behaviour therapy is a newcomer on the scene, the patients most frequently referred to behaviour therapists are those who show no signs of spontaneous remission, and in whom many other methods of treatment (including psychoanalysis, electro-shock, and even leucotomy) have been tried in vain. It is the success of behaviour therapists with cases of this kind that has been most impressive to colleagues in hospitals who have tried other methods without success.

H. J. EYSENCK

Institute of Psychiatry
Maudsley Hospital
London

Brecht & Stalin

I AM A LITTLE disappointed that so perceptive a literary critic as Martin Esslin should find it so difficult to accept (as Sidney Hook put it to him in his ENCOUNTER letter (March)—that along with Bert Brecht's political hard-headedness went more than a small measure of hard-heartedness. When one looks at some of the main incidents of his biography as well as some of the major themes of his plays, one should find it quite easy to believe that he approved of the Moscow "Show" Trials whether the guilty were innocent or the innocent guilty, or not.

More often than not he tended to side with the executioners and not the victims. Sometimes he did so with resignation and cynicism (his acceptance of the Stalinist régime of Ulbricht's East Germany), sometimes with unabashed enthusiasm. Of course he was no monster. And occasionally a note of humane dissent would creep into his poetry (those famous verses on the 17th of June 1953 revolt in East Berlin), or in his personal relations with some of his *Meisterschüler* in his Schiffbauerdamm Theatre in East Berlin who found themselves, for some obscure police-state reason or another, behind bars in an *SSD* secret-police prison.

Your readers might be interested in the following vignette which I cull from *Die Zeit* (Hamburg, 15 February 1978) in an interview with a woman who was closely associated with Brecht—Paula Bauholzer, mother of Brecht's son Frank Bauholzer.

> As she remembers: "Once we were walking along the Kanal, and there was a man in the water gasping out *Hick, hick*! And Brecht asked, What's the matter with the fellow? And I said that he was drowning, he was going under. But he didn't make a move to save him. He simply stood there and didn't quite know what to do. But he's going under, I said. Then two men came along and quickly pulled the man out of the water. Brecht had simply stood there helplessly. Physical exercise was not his strong point. . . ."

No, it does seem that B.B. was never very strong on the issues of life and death.

J. B. PHILLIPS

Oxford

Minogue's "Galbraith"

I WAS GLAD, after I had finished Kenneth Minogue on John Kenneth Galbraith in the December issue, to learn from the cover that his was a "sceptical piece" about "how wit and wisdom come to get a bad name." Had I not been so post-warned, I might have thought I had read another of those so-fashionable debunkings of Galbraith. After all, is he not by now the man the "real" economists love to hate? Has he not long since committed the cardinal sin of becoming a "populariser"?

Still, the article did raise some provoking questions, though hardly those intended by the author. "Given that Galbraith is an economist, why should we bother with his view of human reality?" Nice, that. Says so much, especially that economists don't deal with—have nothing to say about—human reality (which is what, exactly?), plus playing on a host of suspicions already entertained by many, even among the enlightened. "But where are these believers in the *pure*

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[italics mine] beneficence of suffering by others?" Nice, again. (Galbraith is an economist, economists are heartless, ergo Galbraith is heartless.) It is perfectly true that, with luck, we "may not meet them every day", but they seem to this observer to exist everywhere in Britain's political (dare I say "economic"?) spectrum.

It seems to me that Professor Minogue has not avoided the pitfalls of precisely the kind of writing he professes to despise in Galbraith. Perhaps that is the nature of economics; in any event, the Charter of the Bank of England refers to creating money out of nothing. Given that, anything goes, and goes, and goes, and goes.

SUSAN H. LLEWELLYN

Dublin

I WROTE, "Given that Galbraith is an economist, why should we bother with his view of human reality. . . ." because it is his status as a contributor to economics which is Professor Galbraith's primary claim on our attention. Not being an economist myself, I was also seeking to emphasise that I was concerned with more general issues. As I have repeated elsewhere, it is not the fact that Galbraith popularises to which I object, but to some of the devices he uses to flatter the reader into a union of the like-minded deploring the follies of mankind which we are supposed to see so very clearly. Popularisation should at least attempt to avoid *unnecessary* distortion.

KENNETH MINOGUE

London

Kennan Misreads the Kremlin

By Lord Gladwyn

AS ONE WHO worked closely with George Kennan during the last War and who has followed closely the development of his thought since then, perhaps I might comment briefly on his article in the March ENCOUNTER and on the vigorous comebacks to it of Professor Richard Pipes and Mr Leopold Labedz.

Kennan's views on how best to achieve a real East/West *détente* seem to amount, in an initial stage, to "a series of private gatherings [of Americans, we must assume] in which would be included not only high-level policy-makers . . . but leading figures of the opposition" as well as "a few others interested in Russian affairs." The object of these gatherings would be to think out the basis of a "new relationship" with the Soviet Government "in the military field." The reasoning behind the Kennan "new testament" (as opposed to his "old testament" of "containment") is, very broadly, that, contrary to the calamitous views of desperate nationalists and anti-Communists, the present Soviet régime is totally different from what it was under Stalin. Its leaders, we read, are "the victims of the ideology in which they were reared." They are "perhaps the most conservative ruling group to be found anywhere in the world; elderly, cautious, with a horror of war and with absolutely no intention ever to launch one. . . ." Mr Brezhnev is nothing less than "a man of peace"—a sort of Russian Chamberlain. The motivations of the Soviet Government are hence entirely pacific: what worries them most is the great difficulty, in spite of huge assistance from the West, in running the economy of their vast country.

THERE IS SOMETHING very odd about this surely not unfair analysis. If (as Mr Labedz rightly points out) Mr Brezhnev and his colleagues are so old, so conservative, and so peaceful, why do they pile up conventional armaments of all kinds to such a vast extent and beyond all conceivable defensive needs and refuse to make the slightest advance in Vienna on MBFR? If they are intent on *détente* and a peaceful settlement with America, what is the point of sending Cuban armies all over Africa? If there really has been some fundamental change of heart on their part, why not give some effect to the human rights provisions of Helsinki? Only—as Professor Pipes seems to suggest—in respect of SALT would it seem that the thesis has some validity. For it is possible that there the Russians are caught in the same trap as the Americans—one step forward, and one side may be (theoretically) either the slave of the other or, potentially, the master of the world. The logic is indeed absurd, but it is certainly regarded as valid by the military on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

No, however much we may sympathise with the

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despairing sage of the Princeton *Schule der Weisheit* there is, unfortunately, only one reasonable explanation of the conduct of the rulers of Russia. and though I do not know whether your two anti-Kennan contributors would agree with it, I rather hope they would. These rulers probably do sincerely believe that Western "capitalistic" society is vicious, unstable and, since it is nearing its end, probably dangerous. Hitler's invasion of Russia and the appalling atrocities of the Nazis in the Ukraine and elsewhere have not been forgotten and there is an instinctive fear that this sort of thing could happen once again. And even if some do not really believe all this in their hearts, there is a well-founded apprehension, a *dunkle Ahnung*, that if, by any chance, Western society overcomes the present slump, makes its peace with the Third World and, at the same time, maintains a "credible" defensive system, their own Spartan régime is, in the long run, doomed: their satellites will revolt, their Empire will fall apart, Solzhenitzyn

"These Ignorant Isles"

London

THE REWARDS **of a good education may be many. But in Britain today good money is certainly not one of them. There was a time when a parent could advise a school-leaving child to spend three to five extra years acquiring scientific or academic qualifications in the confident knowledge that such effort would eventually incur substantial financial benefits. No longer.**

Indeed, it is not too rash to predict that we will soon be reaching a stage in this country where a long and arduous education will act as a positive deterrent to earning power. The more you know the less you will get.

We have already achieved a wage structure where the differential earnings between a highly skilled professional person and a totally unskilled one are among the smallest—if not the smallest—in the world. And that includes the Communist countries as well.

THE WAGES EXPLOSION *of the last few years have rocketed millions of totally unqualified workers to a position where they are perched on the same rungs of the earnings ladder as those who have spent their youth acquiring diplomas and degrees from polytechnics and universities.*

Almost every day we can read about how easy it is for the muscular or the gormless to make big money. A plasterer's mate boasts about shovelling in £400 a week; a lorry driver, disqualified from driving because he could not resist watching a TV set while at the wheel, complained that his earnings would now drop from £100 to £40 a week.

If these are exceptional earnings—and for lorry drivers they are not as exceptional as all that—the statistics show how narrow is the gap between totally uneducated workers and highly educated professional workers. Although the figures are rather generalised and necessarily approximate, depending upon such factors as overtime worked, anti-social hours and weighting allowances, they are the average earnings, before deductions, of salaried people in these jobs.

IT WILL BE SEEN THAT *the teenager who does not bother with his O-levels, or any other qualifications, can quickly be earning £50 a week. If he is a docker, a motor car worker, a postman in London, or a coal face miner, he will be earning between £60 to £70 when he is 21.*

During this time when the young worker will be able to indulge in such luxuries as smart clothes, a car, a stereo, the aspiring professional worker will be existing on nothing but a student grant—or what his parents care to give him. And even when he qualifies as a chemical or mechanical engineer, a teacher or an architect, it will not be until he is 30 years old that he will be making as much money as the totally unqualified worker.

It is not until after 30 that the earnings gap begins to widen between the educated and the highly educated. And even at 40 the earnings differential is only about one-third higher for the mechanical engineer over the docker. Because powerful unions are now able to extract higher rises than the less militantly organised professional men, and because tax rates bite much more severely after £80 a week, even this derisory margin of reward is destined to shrink even further.

If present trends continue, it will not be long—we may already have reached it—where the net lifetime earnings *between 16 to 65 of persons with no educational qualifications at all will outstrip those who have spent many years learning specialised skills and crafts.*

NOW HOW DO OUR **differentials compare with a private enterprise country like Germany?**

Although all wages are higher in Germany—manual workers average between £80 to £100 a week—a chemical engineer earns almost three times more than a postman, a teacher almost twice as much as an unskilled worker. A dentist at the age of 30 can earn £30,000 a year while a doctor can do much better. Compare that to the £6,200 paid to an average GP in Britain.

What about the Communist countries? Are they too, indifferent to educational qualifications and skills? Not at all.

In Hungary the professional worker can earn almost three times more than the non-educated worker. The highest paid can get six times more than the average low-paid.

In Poland the skilled engineer earns twice as much as a postman. The doctor almost three times as much. The director of a large factory over five times as much.

"We believe that higher qualifications and

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will return in triumph, and their own horrid fate is predictable enough.

THUS THEIR OBJECTIVE MUST, by the very force of things, be to undermine and weaken Western society by all means in their power and hasten its downfall. This objective cannot be proclaimed on the housetops: the adversary must, if possible, be persuaded—as clearly Kennan has been persuaded—that Russia is "just an ordinary Great Power" with certain legitimate interests. Nor is war desirable in itself, very much the contrary. But the Imperialists must not be tempted to resort to it. Hence the need for the Soviet Union to be at least as powerful militarily as the West taken as a whole, and preferably more powerful, so that when the West breaks up it will not be able to hit out in its last death throe. Yet the death throe may well be at hand; and if so, it should be promoted. Any anti-Western revolutionary movements in the Third World are, therefore, desirable as likely to deprive the

Does Education Pay?

higher skills ought to have a higher reward," said the Hungarian spokesman. "In Poland the incentive to get educated is very great," said my Polish informant.

ALTHOUGH SOME DEDICATED *left-wing Socialists may welcome this move towards an economic egalitarian society, it is unlikely that this Labour Government ever intended it to happen. It is a wages policy that has come about more by accident than design. Nevertheless as wage structures harden it will become more and more difficult to reverse. And in a free, mixed economy, it poses serious individual and national problems.*

AS A PARENT *with two daughters soon to contemplate the prospect of a university education, can I honestly urge them to spend five years acquiring qualifications which will mean little to them in economic terms?*

Of course I will sing the praises of a contemplative mind, recommend the rewards of curiosity stimulated by education, argue the case for job satisfaction. But I will do so without much fire or conviction.

Am I honestly sure that she will be happier as a badly-paid librarian rather than a well-paid receptionist? Will the years of slog to qualify as a teacher or a laboratory technician be worth the years lost between 18 and 22 when she could be relatively independent and unpressurised, earning good money as a secretary?

And if a middle-class parent has doubts about the benefits of a higher education, how much more difficult will it be for working-class parents to convince their children that technological and professional skills are worth having? Why should a working-class lad aim to be a doctor, engineer, scientist or architect when all his chums who are lorry drivers or bricklayers can be earning money he is never likely to earn until he is 40?

And wasn't it the goal of the Socialist revolution to open up, to the working class, jobs and professions that had previously been barred to them by lack of opportunity? And in an incentiveless society won't that goal be more difficult to achieve?

FROM A NATIONAL STANDPOINT, **there are already signs that we are beginning to produce fewer educated people and those that we do educate are less and less keen to stay here. The Government has set up an urgent study to discover why thousands of students are less willing to stay on at school and aim for university.**

Statistics reveal that by 1981 120,000 fewer pupils will be staying at school beyond 16 than were estimated only three years ago. By 1986, it is calculated, 155,000 fewer would be staying on. With rewards for higher qualifications so puny are these figures any real surprise?

And although the brain drain has been a persistent and endemic British problem since the War—often stemmed by sporadic gusts of generosity to the better educated—there are signs that the present outflow of skilled technicians and professional people is greater than ever before.

A GLANCE AT *the employment advertisements in any paper will show the temptations being offered British skilled personnel.*

Doctors at double and treble their salaries are wanted in Saudi Arabia. A civil engineer is offered £12,000 in Brazil. A TV finance executive is worth £15,000 in South Africa. A marketing director can get £13,000 in Amsterdam.

For too long low wages have been one of the depressing scandals of the British economy. But in righting that wrong, the national cake is now being divided too inequitably between the educated and the uneducated.

It has been her brainpower not her muscle power, her knowledge not her sweat, her inventiveness not her predictability, her energetic ingenuity not her staid orthodoxy that has enabled this small country to compete on equal terms with countries more endowed with natural resources.

IF THIS NATION DOES NOT DO **more to show its respect for learning and education by providing adequate and differential rewards for those who sacrifice years acquiring qualifications and skills, we will become known by our advanced, technological rivals as The Ignorant Isles. We will survive as an amusing national relic, but not much more.**

Milton Shulman
in the *Evening Standard* (London)

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West of raw materials. Another oil embargo would be the most desirable thing of all. As for Human Rights, the Western campaign in their favour is simply designed to stir up discontent in the USSR and this cannot be permitted for obvious reasons. If *détente* is injured thereby so much the worse. *Détente*, except as a means of advancing the Soviet cause and obtaining the very necessary credits, is a bourgeois delusion.

If, as some (including Mr James Callaghan) predict, there is likely to be a spread of economic nationalism, involving protectionism, in the Western world, who is to say that the Soviet leaders may not be right, from their point of view—and I repeat, from their point of view—in holding such views? Whether they are justified will hence depend, not on *détente*, not even on the SALT negotiations, but rather on the ability of the Western leaders, and notably of the leaders of the countries of the EEC, to take such measures as will increase production, diminish mass unemployment, and accumulate sufficient reserves to provide, in some measure, for the needs of the developing world. And if the Russians go on increasing their armaments, the West, despite the obvious dangers, will have no option but to stay in the race, just as we shall have at some stage to mobilise resistance to the Cubans in Africa. All this may seem to be madness in Princeton—and perhaps in London's Transport House—but the alternative is surrender.

On Obscenities

YOUR poetry reviewer would appear to have impeccable critical taste when it comes to literary obscenities —I refer to his elegant disposal of a Four-Letter Bard in your current issue (April)—but he is less fastidious when it comes to political obscenities.

The mass murders by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia have outraged the world. But, according to James Fenton, not reviewing poetry but politics in his column in the *New Statesman* ("What about Cambodia?", 6 January 1978), the world has got it wrong. Of course he doesn't deny that they are Communists, and that they are liquidating tens of thousands of men, women, and children. As Fenton writes:

> "If you consider merely the events since the fall of the capital, it may indeed be perfectly serviceable as a watch-word for the crassest forms of anti-communism: remember Cambodia—there were these communists—they took over—look what happened. As long as you ignore what went before, you may find this argumentative style attractive."

Your poetry reviewer who takes an admirably long view (from Shakespeare to Auden) when judging new verse for your pages, also goes in for the elongated perspective when judging political crimes. How "crass" to think, with typical anti-communist McCarthyite hysteria, that the Communists are, truly and deep down, really responsible for the inhumanities committed! How deceptively "attractive" it is to think that the politicians who commit a specific crime are the actual criminals! No, we must not be so simple-minded. Reading and writing poetry has evidently taught him to be subtle and complex and almost devious.

> "But if you take the whole history of the war, Cambodia becomes a symbol of something else. The word stands for the way the possibility of a good society can be destroyed. It was an American who coined the expression, 'bomb them into the Stone Age.' It was America that set the process going in Cambodia."

So the Americans are guilty! And who is guilty of the Gulag Archipelago? Presumably Winston Churchill and the Allied Intervention "that set the process going." And who was guilty of the Hitlerian Holocaust? Presumably the vindictive Men of Versailles with their harsh anti-German peace "that set the process going."

And who is guilty of Idi Amin's massacres in East Africa? Who (unless you fall prey to the serviceable watchwords of anti-Africanism) but the White British Imperialists, the men of the Black Hole of Calcutta and Amritsar and the Hola camps, who "set the process going"?

Last but not least, who bears the deep-down authentic criminal responsibility for the blowing up just a few days ago of the Belfast La Mon hotel which killed fifteen people out to a Saturday night dance? Now, none of your crass argumentatively attractive anti-IRA-terrorism! Let us never "ignore what went before"—Oliver Cromwell, the scourge of Ireland, and those killers at Culloden, who "set the process going."

Here is a lesson for us all—observe Fenton's Rule when next you plan your forthcoming round of necessary political murders—latch on to some Ongoing Situation, and make sure you can pin it all on some other chaps who "set the process going."

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London

WANNA BET?: Behind the romanticism and antique pageantry of the British Royal Jubilee there still lies the shrewd political sense of the Queen and her advisers, who have learned, as the Romanoffs never did, that the retention of privilege depends on bending with the political winds. Few people would have guessed 25 years ago that the Queen would be the heroine of the Labor party, and even if a British Communist government were to come to power in another 25 years, it is safe [writes Anthony Sampson] to predict that the monarch, with estates intact, would still be there, making the speech from the throne proclaiming the new dogma.

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

Monaco

THAT SWEET ENEMY: *French was always hard for an Englishman to speak, since he couldn't really take those nasals and round front vowels very seriously—the vowels in feu, coeur, bleu, pu, cru. And the French are merciless to its inept speakers. No interviewer who comes to see me [writes Anthony Burgess] moderates speed or vocabulary for the benefit of a poor foreigner. If I make, which I frequently do, an error in gender, there is a wince from the listener, as though I was offering him a nice strong cup of tea.*

People, think the French, ought to know French; it is the primal language that came even before Latin; it is the language of culture and logic. If you don't know it well, you'd better not know it at all. Italians are different: they take your mangled Tuscan as a compliment. But the French are Cartesian and unforgiving.

The French language always sounds sure of itself. Indeed, it sounds dogmatic and arrogant. Even prostitutes speak like schoolmistresses, and waiters have no hesitation about correcting your grammar. The tone of arrogance is not an accident of intonation, like the sobbing of German; the French are expressing arrogance by means of the sounds of arrogance. Can the French and the English really become friends, as opposed to customers?

Sir Philip Sidney called France "that sweet enemy." That seems to be the position still.

THE OBSERVER

Washington D.C.

FINLANDIZATION: The term "Finlandization" —meaning that process or state of affairs in which, under the cloak of maintaining friendly relations with the Soviet Union, the sovereignty of a country becomes reduced—has entered the political dictionary despite the protests of Helsinki, Helsinki's Western well-wishers, the Russians, and some American neo-isolationists.

There is an element of injustice [Walter Laqueur writes] whenever geographical terms acquire a political meaning—not everything in Byzantium was Byzantine, not everything in the Levant was Levantine, not everyone in Shanghai is shanghaied, and if the Balkans were balkanized, it was largely the fault of outside powers. "Finlandization", in any case, is here to stay: it has become the subject of articles, books and even doctoral dissertations.

COMMENTARY

Aberystwyth

BLUE BOOKS: *About 100 books considered offensive by some readers at Aberystwyth Public Library have been banished to an upstairs storeroom. But Mr Alun Edwards, country librarian who instituted the "blue" shelf system, said yesterday, after complaints about censorship, that adult readers can see the books on request.*

Defending his decision Mr Edwards, a Calvinistic Methodist deacon, said he strongly believed that the censorship laws should be tightened up. "I feel I have the right as a librarian to tighten them myself." He said the decision to allow publication of "Lady Chatterley's Lover" some 20 years ago opened the floodgates for a "deluge of filth", and was a root cause of the Moors murders.

An Aberystwyth councillor said he thought the policy of withdrawing a book on the strength of one complaint—often without the librarian's having even read it—was ludicrous.

Better known books on the "blue" shelf include Frank Harris's "My Life and Loves", Edna O'Brien's "Casualties of Peace", Brian Aldiss's "The Erector Set", Colin MacInnes's "Mr Love and Justice", and several works by Henry Miller.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

London

MYSTERY PLAY: Discussing the BBC's plan to produce the complete works of Shakespeare, Atticus stated last week that Timothy of Athenea is unlikely to attract a mass audience. I'm sure that a minority audience of keen Bardolators would be most interested to see this play, not to mention The Three Gentlemen of Veroia; Cymbalist, King of Brittany; and Hamish, Prince of Denmark Hill.

SUNDAY TIMES

Peking

DEADLY EUPHEMISM: *Radicals issued six million rounds of ammunition to the million-strong Shanghai militia the day after Chairman Mao died,* New China Agency *said yesterday. The move was said to have been part of the radicals' abortive plot to spark an uprising in Shanghai to prevent Hua-feng from succeeding Mao as Chairman of the Chinese Communist party.*

The Communist party newspaper said a "handful of active counter-revolutionaries who had opposed Chairman Mao, Premier Chou, Chairman Hua and the party's Central Committee, have been subjected to the dictatorship of the proletariat." This phrase is sometimes used as a euphemism for execution.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

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1478
1978 **Oxford University Press**

The Oxford University Press

An Informal History

Peter Sutcliffe

This history of the O.U.P. is published in the year in which the Press celebrates 500 years of printing in Oxford. Its approach is episodic, but it is essentially a story of continuity: it focuses on the characters – strong, eccentric, petty and great – who made the firm the foremost academic publishing and printing business in the world. Illustrated £6.75

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An Illustrated History 1478–1978

Nicolas Barker

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A Study of Ideas and Motivation in the Southern Zone 1940–42

H. R. Kedward

This comprehensive survey of the Resistance is based on clandestine Resistance publications, memoirs, and interviews. It is a scholarly and dispassionate, though highly readable, account of a period on which most of the literature has been written by participants, and it examines the very difficult problem of why a small minority of French people began to oppose the occupying Germans and the government of Marshal Pétain. £8.50

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